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Leonard H. Nason
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**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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Headings . . . . . **B. Westmacott**

Cover Design . . . . . **H. C. Murphy**

Three Complete Novelettes and a New Serial

WHEN the Frankish fleet attacks Constantinople and intrigue loses the city for the Greeks —then, *Khalil* and *Richard* of Brienne, each in his way, have a chance to gain their heart's desires. "THE SHIELD," a complete novelette by Harold Lamb, will appear in the next issue.

THE burning miles of the Saharian wastes lead to the encampment of the raiding Moors. And soon, *Lieutenant Lartal* knows, he must discover the answer to the question that is wrecking his morale. "THE MAN WHO LIVED," a complete novelette by Georges Surdez, will appear in the next issue.

"THOSE river bandits tried to steal our whole shipload of *tagua*. Well, process of law is not for us of the Upper Rivers. We make our own law." "THE KING OF THE BLACK WATER," a complete novelette by Gordon MacCreagh, will appear in the next issue.

SERGEANT EADIE finds that it is pretty much of a disgrace to be gassed, but that if you lick the C. O.'s pet cook, three M. P.s will ride you all over France free of charge. "CHEVRONS," a five-part story by Leonard H. Nason, will begin in the next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this issue.

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SOUVENIRS

A Complete Novel

By Leonard H. Nason

Author of "The Sergeant of Cavalry," "Burial," etc.

THE guns that had bayed at each other all night like watch-dogs on adjoining farms began to subside, one by one, into silence. When the artillery fire ceased the sound of machine-guns was faintly audible, a distant clatter like the buzz of conversation in a restaurant when the orchestra stops playing. This noise began to grow fainter as gun after gun ceased firing, and its gunners took it down and went to bed.

Daylight was coming. At the hour just before dawn, unless a pitched battle was in progress, both armies held their breath and got every man under cover. For the half-light of daybreak was the best for raids, surprize attacks, and sudden bombardments that would catch troops in the disorder of bivouacing, when unattended horses might be stampeded and tumult and confusion spread through a whole division. The quiet, however, continued unbroken.

Some distance in rear of the American front was an open field surrounded by woods. The woods were grim and silent, and the closest observer would have sworn they were unoccupied. There was a regiment of .75's along the edge of that woods, and a squadron of tanks a little farther back. The men of the regiment had ceased firing and were asleep, all except one man of

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each battery, who remained awake to give the alarm in case of a gas attack, or to awaken the sleepers if the infantry should send up a rocket asking for a barrage. One of these guards, the man who had the post at the extreme end of the woods, where F Battery had its position, stepped out from beneath the tree that sheltered him, and looked up into the sky. This man was very tall and thin, with a long nose that had a perpetual glow on the end, and, in cold weather, a twinkling drop. The man looked up. Overhead was a deep blue vault, with a few little white clouds, turned a light pink by the rising sun.

"Ugh!" grunted the man under the tree. "They look like goldfish!"

He gave a slight shudder. Goldfish was the Army name for a fearful canned mass of ground-up skin and backbones, with here and there a piece of salmon for flavoring.

"Lookit," continued the man. "There goes some planes home. I hope they give Fritz ——!"

A flight of bombers, flying the V-shaped formation that migrating birds had taught them to use, went humming their solitary way toward their hangars. The man watched with craning neck, as the bombers went booming their way across that blue-pink dome. Suddenly he gave a convulsive start.

"Oh ——!" he cried.

He made as if to beat upon the shell-case alarm that hung from a tree near his hand, but he reconsidered, and cursing terribly, looked again into the morning sky.

The bombers were flying low, and hence were black against the heavens. Above them, far far up, higher even than the woolly clouds, was a glittering something, a white, ghost-like object, a shining moth. The sun twinkled upon its under body. There were more like the first; they seemed to take substance from the air, and where the man on the ground had seen six of these things, he could now count ten, and rubbing his eyes to make sure he had made no mistake, he discovered five more, a little behind and above the first.

"Maybe they ain't boche after all," said the man.

The moths swooped as one, directly upon the black planes below, which still continued their peaceful homeward way. The man on the ground howled and leaped in air. What was the matter with those guys? Didn't they see all the boche planes in Germany coming for them? There was no safety for them in flight; the Germans could fly two feet to their one.

The front of the German planes began to sparkle, and their guns opened up, and the tracer bullets flew toward the bombers. The Germans swarmed about the Americans now, like a cloud of mosquitoes. A burst of flame, a long finger of smoke pointing downward, and a burning bomber hurtled earthward. Three Germans followed it, their guns sparking, for they had no intention of letting any man of the Americans escape. The three planes followed the burning wreckage so far that the man on the ground could see the cross on their wings as they swung about to climb back to the slaughter again. Another bomber came down in flames, but the cloud of twisting, squirming planes went out of sight beyond the trees, and the gas guard saw no more of them.

"Hot ripe tamales!" he said. "Ain't I glad I ain't no aviator! Well, it's time I was gettin' the cooks up."

He trotted down the edge of the woods and came to an open shed-like affair that had been used in other days to keep farm machinery under. Under the shed was a rolling kitchen, a ration cart, a number of boxes and a portable table. Beneath the ration cart was a disorderly pile of blankets, but upon closer examination a head could be seen to protrude here, a hobnailed shoe there and an arm somewhere else. The gas guard went to this pile, and reaching between the spokes of the wheel, shook one of the peaks of this range of blanket mountains.

"Hey, Joe! Git up!" said the gas guard. Joe answered never a word. The gas guard took hold of the blanket and tried to pull it away, but the sleeper had so rolled and wrapped himself in it that it was impossible to remove it.

"Joe!" cried the guard again. "Come on, it's late. Git outta that!"

No action. Those who slept beneath the cart were the cooks and the two permanent cooks' police. It was one of the cooks' police, or K. P.'s, that the guard was trying to arouse. These K. P.'s got up first and built the fires in the rolling kitchen, and when the fire burned briskly and the water boiled in the marmite cans, the cooks were awakened. It was therefore a difficult task

to awaken two men and not awaken the other two, especially when all four slept coiled about each other like a bunch of snakes. The gas guard became desperate. He crawled beneath the cart, but the man Joe was too far for him to reach. He crawled out and ran around to the front end. Another cook slept at that end, and again he could not reach Joe. The whereabouts of the other K. P. in that billowy mass of blankets was impossible to find.

"I'll fix 'em," muttered the guard.

There was a long paddle leaning against the side of the rolling kitchen, and this the gas guard secured. Back to the ration cart he fled, and began to stir and poke with the paddle as if he were stirring slum. There was an angry snarl from the pile of blankets.

"Git up, Joe! Come on, roll out, it's gettin' late!" Another snarl and the heap began to heave. The gas guard plied his paddle vigorously.

"Hey, fer ——'s sake," groaned Joe, "lay off! You broke every rib I got. Nix on that —— thing!"

A cook here came to life and lifted bloodshot eyes and tousled head from the heap.

"Git up!" said he, and began to kick vigorously. The heap of blankets wriggled and writhed as if alive, the two cooks' police leaped out, and the other cook, speaking his mind freely, crawled from beneath the cart, and going over to the rolling kitchen, began to throw pans on the brick floor of the shed.

"——!" said he. "Can't git no sleep here, with them guys makin' more noise than a barrage. Work like a dog all day gettin' food ready for 'em to fill their big long gut with an' then they won't let me sleep. Come on, louse, git over here an' git bendin' down on these pans!"

More pans clattered out, the irate cook leaped upon the wheel of the kitchen and cried out for assistance in getting a marmite can out of the stove. The marmite can was lifted by means of a long pole, that hooked into holes in the can. The pole required two men to work it.

"Come on, louse!" called the cook. "You Joe there, —— yore dirty soul, come here and give me a hand. Man whatever! If I'd only let you, you K. P.'s would lie on the flat o' yore backs all day an' have me wait on you hand an' foot. Joe! I'll larn you!"

The cook seized his marmite pole and leaped off the wheel with it. Joe sat with his back to the angered cook, putting on his shoes. The cook, motioning to his assistant, ran over to Joe and with a swift motion slid the hooks of the pole under Joe's belt. The two cooks gave a heave, and Joe did a very fine loop-the-loop, landing on his nose. The cook thereupon kicked him posteriorly as a counter-irritant.

"Git to work!" said the cook. "When I git up the water's supposed to be boilin' an' the fire built. Ain't none of it done."

"You ain't supposed to git up now," objected Joe, rubbing himself.

"I ain't supposed to git up!" roared the cook. "I ain't supposed to git up now! Man whatever! How the blue crisscrossed —— an' be —— a man can sleep with you a crawlin' all over him like the big cootie you are, I'd like tuh know. When I gits waked up the breakfast is supposed tuh be started. It ain't. Git goin' then."

Once again he kicked Joe.

"Don't kick me no more," said Joe.

Tableau. The other cooks' police stopped with a piece of box in air and knee lifted on which to break it, the assistant cook stepped quickly to the kitchen and picked up a cleaver, and the cook who had kicked Joe opened his mouth with surprize. An Army cook was a sacred being, and for a greasy K. P. to object to a disciplinary kick was a crime of the deepest dye. The cook, his face convulsed with anger, advanced holding his marmite lifter like a pole ax.

"Put down that pole," said Joe, "an' I'll bloody your nose for you."

The assistant advanced with his cleaver. Then up and spoke the gas guard.

"Stay where you are," said he, "an' you, Dewey Bartlett, put down that marmite pole."

The gas guard was armed, the only one of the five that had a pistol, and this pistol he held in his hand. The cook looked helplessly around. There were the solitary fields and the black woods, gray with the coming day, a K. P. who let every man kill his own snakes, an assistant cook who had but little use for his chief, a very stern-looking K. P. named Joe, and the gas guard with his holster flap unbuttoned.

"—— your lousy hide!" cried the cook and made a pass at Joe with the pole. Joe dodged and tried to duck under the pole. The cook retreated nimbly and made another attempt to smite Joe upon the skull.

"What the —— is all this!" cried a voice. The K. P. immediately began to break wood, the assistant cook hunted madly for something in the front part of the kitchen, the gas guard began to survey the scenery, and the former battlers picked up the marmite pole and hurriedly ran to the rolling kitchen with it.

"Here now," continued the newcomer, "what's all this about?"

This man had stolen up unheeded in the excitement. He was tall and thin, with gold oak leaves upon the shoulders of his blouse. His face was not one to inspire confidence nor a feeling of mirth in a man. He was the commander of the battalion of artillery to which this battery belonged.

"Answer me!" said he. "What's going on here?"

"Well," said the cook, "this here K. P. was a-argufyin', sir."

"I don't care about that," said the major. "Here it is within an hour of breakfast, not a thing ready, and the kitchen detail scuffling and fooling. I'll consult with the battery commander about this. You! What are you doing here?" This to the gas guard, who leaped his length and then saluted.

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing? Aren't you on guard somewhere? What are you wearing side-arms for?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yes, sir?" roared the major. "What the —— do you mean, yes, sir? I'll yes, sir you! Are you an F Battery man?"

The gas guard nodded his head, not daring to make any reply.

"We'll see about you, too," remarked the major. "What's your name?"

"Sanborn, sir."

"You're under arrest," said the major. He lighted a cigaret, and turning upon his heel, as the books say, started away. "You, too," he said over his shoulder to the cooks. "You're all under arrest." Then he stalked away.

"If I had a ax," said Joe, "I'd sure bring it down on that skull o' his an' take a chance on layin' it to the boche."

"What d'yuh want to spoil a good ax for?" asked the cook. "Come on, fer —— sake git your fire agoin'."

"Bones," called one of the K. P. to the lean gas guard. "Give us a hand on breakin' up these boxes."

"I dassent," said Bones. "I've got to get back on post. That bird will fix it for me to get shot if I don't."

"He caught yuh off post once, it won't be no worse if you stay off."

"That's right," said Bones. He began to hunt the pockets of his overcoat for a cigaret and, finding the stump of one, he lighted it, and then assisted in building the fire in the kitchen. This was a quiet front, where the Red Cross and the K. C. functioned well, and the men were plentifully supplied with ready-made cigarets.

THE two K. P.'s and Bones worked manfully at the fire, the cook sliced bacon, and the assistant cook opened cans of syrup and corned-beef hash with a cleaver. The fire soon roared, and a pleasant smell of boiling coffee filled the air. The fall air was biting, and the warmth of the kitchen was more than pleasant.

"How come," said one of the K. P.'s to Bones, "you didn't tell the major you come down here to wake us up?"

"Well," said Bones, "I didn't think he'd appreciate it. It ain't really official. The mess sergeant is supposed to wake up the cooks, bein' waked up himself by the guard. Well, he said to me to go right down an' wake up the cooks myself, an' not bother him. 'Well, that would be all right' says I, 'only if I waked just you up, that hole you sleeps in with the rest o' the sergeants that ain't got a gun crew is right in sight o' the gas alarm, while if I go way down to the kitchen, an' overcome gas, I couldn't even hit the alarm with a rock.' 'True,' says he, 'but when any gas comes over the whole sector starts to make more noise than election night, so you won't be missed none, an' in addition,' says he, 'you rate breakfast a half hour before any one else, an' a little piece o' steak every time we gets a meat issue.' Nothin' could be fairer than that, thinks I, so it works fine till this morning."

"They'll hang you for quittin' post, you betcha!" remarked the assistant cook.

"Uh huh!" agreed Bones gloomily.

The pan containing the hash began to steam, the bread was sliced and stacked, the coffee in the marmite cans boiled merrily, and the cook stirred the hissing bacon in another pan with a long fork.

"Well, boys, have a little java," he invited.

The four men stepped up, and received a cup of smoking hot coffee. In the woods whistles began to blow where the men were being aroused. The kitchen detail blew upon their hot coffee and hoped they would have time to finish it before the hungry mob arrived for breakfast. The sun was well up now and promised a fine morning at least. After a month of nearly steady rain fine weather was all the more welcome.

The K. P. named Joe sat down on the limber of the kitchen. Apparently all trace of ill-feeling between him and the cook had departed, but nevertheless Joe's face was sad. Bones sat down beside him.

"What's bitin' of you, Joe?" he asked.

"I was thinkin' what a —— of a thing war was," said Joe. "There I had a nice lunch room an' cigar counter all runnin' good, back there in Turner's Falls where I come from, an' along comes this war an' drags me into the Army an' look at me now, washin' pans from dawn till dark, an' bein' kicked around by that ignorant tarheel that never earned a day's pay in his life."

"Ain't it ——!" agreed Bones.

"Furthermore," said Joe, "this ain't no way to fight a war, bein' a dish-washer. 'How many Germans did you kill?' asks the girls when I gets home. 'I didn't kill none,' says I, 'I was a dish-washer.' "

"There's lots o' time yet," said Bones encouragingly.

"No, there ain't. There's rumors that the war's about over."

"I heard we was goin' to have a turkey dinner Thanksgivin', too," remarked Bones. "You'd be surprized the things you'll hear, specially if you got somethin' wrong with your innards."

"Well, this is straight."

"Yeh, it always is. I never heard a rumor yet that wasn't got right from Black Jack's own orderly. But supposin' it's true, ain't the end of the war what you crave?"

"Yes, I crave the end o' the war, but when I get home from France where I was supposed to be killin' Germans with both hands and one foot they'll want to see some evidence. An' I ain't got so much as a button off a Jerry's coat."

"Well, you're in the artillery."

"That don't mean nothin' to a civilian. Civilians think that any one in France is wadin' around knee-deep in blood. An' listen. I seen a truck-driver with a Gott Mit Uns belt, all plastered up with buttons. 'Where'd yuh get the buttons?' I says. 'Off my dead,' says he. 'Your dead ——,' says I, 'What'd you do, run over 'em?' 'No,' says he, 'when we was on the Marne I was cartin' stiffs for a couple o' days, an' I cut off a button now an' then.' "

"Well, here comes the guys for their breakfast. I better be easin' outta here," said Bones. "I ain't got no business in the kitchen. I wonder what they'll do to me for quittin' post."

"Listen, kid," said Joe earnestly. "You'll get burned, I ain't kiddin'. A man that's caught off post at the front gets stuck in front of a stone wall. How'd yuh like to be a target for a lot of doughboys' to practise on? You'll get shot!"

"No!" said Bones weakly," is that a fact?"

"You bet your next month's pay it is!"

"Oh, my eye!" moaned Bones. "What'll I do?"

"Listen, kid," said Joe, his voice sinkin' to a whisper, "let's you an' me do somethin'. I got a bellyfull o' bein' a K. P. Let's you an' me go over the hill!"

"You're crazier'n ——," said Bones. "They got more M. P.s back o' the lines than they got soldiers on the front. Why, a guy can't go from here to the battalion P. C. without gettin' grabbed. If you think you got a hard job here, you ought to do a little work in a M. P. stockade. Why, that fat guy, 'Butter Ball' Cooke, what went A. W. O. loose in Dijon, they ganted him down fifty pound in a week.

"Button your mouth a minute, for ——'s sake," said Joe earnestly. "Who said anything about goin' to the rear? Up to the front, that's where to go!"

"Up to the front?" gasped Bones. "What the —— does that get yuh?"

"Souvenirs!" cried Joe with energy.

"Come on," yelled the cook, "get issuin' out the bacon. Here's a hundred howlin' animiles to git fed!"

The men arrived from the battery. The gunners had to stick by their guns and their food was taken up to them, but the drivers, telephone linemen, liaison men and general riffraff clamored about the kitchen. Into each mess-kit went a little hash, two pieces of bacon, a little syrup, and a slice of bread on the lid. A good breakfast as breakfasts went on the front, but then this was not an active front. Joe kept an eye upon Bones as he forked out the bacon, and

when there was a pause in the rush, he beckoned.

"Bones," said he, "sneak down to the road. I'll meet you there after breakfast."

"What's the rush?" asked Bones fearfully. "I ain't quite made up my mind. Maybe they won't do nothin' to me for bein' off post. Maybe I'd better stick around a while. I ain't so eager to go huntin' no souvenirs. What if a guy got killed?"

"You dumbbell!" cried Joe. "Why you ain't got the chance of a Y man in ——. When you're dead think o' the advice I give you."

"Huh!" said Bones, but half convinced, "I never done them no harm; they oughtn't to be sore at me for leavin' post a minute."

The first sergeant suddenly rose from where he had been putting his breakfast in a place where it would do the most good for the American Army, and advanced upon Bones.

"Hah!" said the first sergeant, "beatin' it off post, huh? See the Old Man right after breakfast. Takin' a little run to cool coffee, huh? The next time you run you'll have a ball an' chain on your leg."

"Now, listen," cried Bones, "I can talk to you. The mess sergeant is the guy I have to wake up, you know that."

"The mess sergeant don't sleep at the kitchen."

"Well, he told me to go right down an' wake up K. P. s an' never mind botherin' him."

The mess sergeant, hearing his name mentioned, came hurrying over from behind the rolling kitchen, his jaws still working.

"What's this?" he asked, wiping his mouth on his sleeve.

"You tell this man to wake the K. P.'s an' leave you sleep?" asked the top.

The mess sergeant looked at Bones with a what-did-I ever-do-to-you air.

"Never no such thing," said he stoutly.

Bones gasped. He started to protest, but the top sergeant had turned away and the mess sergeant had gone back to the kitchen. Bones followed, and as he gathered up his mess-kit, he managed to move over near Joe.

"Where'll I meet you, Joe?" he whispered.

"You know where that path goes off the road to the well, where they take the horses to water 'em? Wait for me there. I'll be there in ten minutes."

"We gotta work fast," said Bones. "They're liable to put a guy behind me with a gun any minute."

"Beat it," said Joe. "I'll be there."

Bones went back into the woods, going in the direction of the battery post of command. When he had gone through the battery position, he turned at right angles, and picking up a length of telephone wire, allowed it to run loosely through his hand as he followed the direction the wire took. The wire, as he well knew, went through the woods and connected with a trunk line that ran in the ditch beside the main road. Telephone wire at the front was laid on the ground just as it came off the coil, and was of great aid to any one who was not certain of his way.

The brush in the woods was thick, and it was hard going. Nevertheless Bones kept on, spurred by his fear of being seen and seized, and after a time the bushes grew thinner, and he came to the edge of the woods.

"Ah," said Bones, "that was easy." He raised his foot for another step, but did not place it down. His eye had discovered a man sitting on the edge of the road, a man in olive drab, a man who bore the well-known brassard of black, upon which were letters of red. Bones could see the brassard, but not the letters. Nevertheless he knew what they were; they were M. P. At this moment the man turned about and, seeing Bones, hailed.

"Hi," said the M. P. "What's eatin' you? Think I was a boche?"

"Gulp!" said Bones.

His saner thought told him that he had nothing to fear from this policeman. There was a straggler post there, a police post where men going back from the front were held up and made to show the authority of their journey, where isolated prisoners were collected until there were enough of them to justify sending up a mounted man to guard them back to the pens. Bones had on many occasions sat down and shared a pack of cigarets or a bottle of red ink with this policeman and his partner. Bones thereupon took courage.

"How's things?" said Bones, "I thought yuh might be outta cigarets, so I brought yuh up some."

"Well, wasn't yuh kind," said the M. P. "I was just cravin' for a smoke. I was hopin' some A. W. O. L. would be comin'

along the road so we could get a butt off him. By ——, the nights are gettin' cold, yuh know it?"

"It's comin' on winter," said Bones. "I hear the war is near over."

"Don't kid yourself," said the M. P. "I been in France since '17 an' I heard that rumor all the time. The war still seems to drag its weary carcass along. I heard on good authority that we was goin' to have turkey for dinner Thanksgivin'. One soldier, one turk. I heard it last year, too. Well, we had turkey, only it come in a can, and was all mixed up with beef an' soup so's a guy never knew it was there. An' yuh had to share the can, too. So this year when a guy says he just come up from Is-sur-Tille and seen a train-load o' turkeys just come in from the States, I remarks to him, 'Horse-feet'."

"Where's your buddy?" asked Bones.

"He's shavin'," said the M. P. "Yonder's his blouse, where I c'n keep my eye on it so's no one won't steal his brassard. A guy could steal that brassard an' make a tour o' the front an' no one stop him."

"Could he?" asked Bones.

He inspected the blouse. It lay as its owner had cast it, beside an open pack. The owner of the blouse was at a little distance, invisible but audible. He sang:

"Around her neck she wore a yellow ribbon,
She tied it in a bow-knot an' let the ends go free,
An' when they asked her why it was she wore it,
She said 'twas for her lover, who's a strappin' big
M. P."

The song gave place to blasphemy as the razor reaped, for the blade was dull and the water cold, and the soap not all it might have been.

"Ain't it cold!" said Bones, wrapping the shaver's blouse about his shoulders.

"Cold?" said the M. P. "Have a little drink?"

"Drink?" cried Bones. "Where is it?"

The M. P. produced a small gray canteen, covered with corduroy. No second look needed to be given to tell that that canteen had belonged to a German at some former time. The M. P. uncorked it and tendered it to Bones. Bones drank.

"Sulphur and brimstone!" shrieked Bones. "Gimme air!" He coughed and strangled, while spray flew from nose and mouth. "Oh ——!" he cried, "what volcano did you get that lava out of? All the skin is gone off my mouth."

"Ain't it boiled lightnin', though?" grinned the M. P. "It's what the Jerries give their shock troops to make 'em mad. I got it off a prisoner. You don't know how to take it. Lookit, now, go at it slow."

The M. P. sipped. He took another sip, then a third. Anon the tears flowed down his cheeks. Bones wrapped the blouse about him more closely and shivered. The M. P.'s eyes were blinded with water.

"You got the right idea," said Bones. "Drink it slow, an' it runs out your eyes."

"It feels better in your stomach than it does in your throat," said the M. P. gaspingly.

The shaving man began to sing once more, as token that the disagreeable job was over.

"In time o' peace the wise guy is a cavalryman,
An' can keep his smokes an' chewin' in his condiment can,
But the best little job when yuh have to go to war,
Is a quartermaster sergeant o' the quartermaster corps.
Oh, he is the guy that issues out th' duds,
An' never never eats a meal o' dessicated spuds."

UP THE road, where the path to the well turned off, Bones perceived a man who looked about him eagerly.

"That's Joe," thought Bones, "I better be goin'."

He put down the M. P.'s blouse and got to his feet. "Well, I must be gettin' on," said he, "I gotta take a message up the road a ways."

"Look out the boche don't get yuh," said the M. P. "Stop by when yuh come back an' I'll give yuh another drink."

"Kid, if you ever see me again," said Bones to himself, "it'll be because I didn't see you first." Then he went hastily up the road and when he came to Joe, beckoned him to follow. "Come Joe," said he, "move your feet. Don't ask me no questions, just get goin'."

They went hastily along. From behind them came a faint yell.

"Hurry," said Bones, "but don't run." Another yell.

"They after us so quick?" gasped Joe. "What the —— was you talkin' to the M. P.s for?"

"I'll say they're after us!" cried Bones. "Might as well be hung for a lamb as a sheep. I done something that they'll hunt for the highest tree in France to hang me

on. There! Listen to that, an' us on a straight road!"

The faint crack of a pistol came to the two men. The road before them was deserted, and it ran without curve or bend, right straight to the mile-distant horizon, where it dropped over a hill. The pistol cracked again. The men broke into a trot, and arms up, shuffled along. Bones looked over his shoulder. Behind them, in the center of the road opposite the straggler post, were two tiny figures that leaped and waved their arms. As Bones watched them, one of the distant figures became motionless and sparks flew from his hand. Bones turned again and fled, and as he took the first step the sound of the M. P.'s pistol carried to his ear. However, the road was long, and a pistol is not much of a weapon at long range, so Bones was unafraid.

"What happened," panted Joe, "that they should go shootin' us up?"

"I was talkin' to one an' gettin' him drunk," said Bones, "an' all the while I was swipin' the brassard off the other one's blouse."

"Oh boy!" gasped the former K. P. "Let's go!"

And they proceeded to do as he suggested.

At the horizon the road dropped abruptly to a wide plain below. The plain stretched a tremendous distance, clear into Germany. The little towns lay peacefully, the smoke from their factories already rising in the still air. The two men came to a stop here and sat down beside a communication trench that followed the road. A great many paths led off into the trees here, belts of barbed wire entanglement came down to the edge of the road and stopped, and the portable gates that would close the road and make the wire belt continuous were lying ready to hand. Through the trees could be seen water-carts, rolling kitchens, and a great many tarpaulins and shelter tents, looking like laundry hung on bushes to dry. These sheltered a portion of the garrison of the trenches who were resting there. The brow of this hill was the Ibis position of the American sector, the line of resistance, and the lower slopes of the hill and the little stretch of plain were only occupied by light outposts of auto rifles and machine-guns.

"Is this the front?" asked Joe.

"Sure is," said Bones.

"I don't see no Germans," objected Joe. "I don't see nothin' down there. That might be trenches runnin' through that town an' again it might not. Lookit them factories smoke. This ain't much of a war, is it?"

"Try walkin' down the middle o' that road," said Bones, "an' see if some one don't try his luck at makin' a sifter outta your helmet."

"Well, let's go," said Joe. "This ain't gettin' us no souvenirs."

"I kinda think we better stay where we are," objected Bones. "I'd like a souvenir, but I got some pockets to carry it in. I don't want to carry it home in my hide. I fear them boche ain't no kind of gentlemen. They'd throw a whole cart-load o' dynamite at us."

"Well, what?" cried Joe. "You aim to sit an' bite your thumbs till the war is over?"

"Now, don't let's get in no sweat," said Bones. "You was the man that suggested us goin' absent. Well, now we're absent, let's take it easy. We got away from the outfit, we just had a good breakfast, they're ain't no one goin' to bother us, no one to say, 'Come on, you, help unload rations.' 'Come on, you, dig a garbage pit.' 'Come on, you, bend your back over them pans.' When it comes dinner-time, let's go to the first chow-gun we can find, and *mangay*. Supper we eat somewheres else. Then we can go about gettin' a couple o' few helmets off some dead boche after dark.

"Meanwhile," continued Bones, "I'll go about putting on this M. P. sign. I don't want no one botherin' us. How come you couldn't put on some britches an' putts? A blind man could tell you was a cook." Bones cast a sneering glance at Joe, who, though he wore overcoat, mask and helmet, still had his underpinning garbed in dungarees that had once been blue, but now were black with that gloss common to the pants of hired dress suits.

"Them denims ain't bad," said Joe, apologetically, "an' anyways I don't want to get my breeches dirty, runnin' around in this mud."

"Well, it ain't very military to go runnin' around with overalls on," observed Bones, putting his overcoat back on, and surveying the brassard with an appraising eye. "That's a pretty looking thing, ain't it? Let's have a cigaret and enjoy life."

Then they lighted cigarets, and sitting on

the edge of the trench, watched the peaceful valley, the airplanes droning across the sky, and from time to time, far in the distance, they could see the white smoke of railroad trains. They smoked and swung their heels, and enjoyed life to the utmost.

A man who is absent without leave enjoys himself hugely the first few hours of his unauthorized vacation by doing nothing. It is a tremendous pleasure to lie upon the flat of one's back and look up at the sky and the birds and the fleecy clouds. A soldier, waking and sleeping, has ever over him the shadow of authority. There are many corporals and over the corporals many sergeants. There are commissioned officers of all grades and when any one of these many men says to a soldier, "Do this," the soldier must do it, no matter how disagreeable it is. Most of the soldier's time is taken up in this manner. How pleasant then it is to lie and have no fear that any rough sergeant will interrupt a man's rest by a gruff order to "Hook on to a shovel and follow me!"

Bones and Joe reclined against the bank and said nothing to each other. The sun was warm and they felt pleasantly drowsy. They smoked and slept by snatches, and awoke and smoked again. Suddenly Bones sat upright with a jerk.

"Joe!" he cried, "I smell bacon!"

Joe opened an eye.

"I didn't know you was hungry," said he.

"I didn't know it myself 'til I smelled that hawg meat," said Bones.

"Let's hunt down that smell an' tell 'em we would like a little chow," suggested Joe.

The two arose and went into the woods a little way. There was a chow-gun there, smoking cheerily, and giving off steam from its marmite cans in a most hospitable manner. This kitchen was evidently one belonging to the garrison of an advanced post, because there was no chow line there, only a half dozen or so men, sitting about with long poles in their hands. These men were ration carriers, waiting to go up to the front with the food. As the two drew near, the cook began to ladle slum out of a marmite can into a row of smaller cans, or squad buckets as they were sometimes called. Bones approached, and smiling winningly addressed the cook.

"Hello, gang," said Bones. "D'yuh reckon we can scoff here?"

The men who sat on the ground stood up, the cook stopped ladling slum, and a deep silence fell. Joe shivered and turned up the collar of his overcoat. The cook looked at Bones, a long contemptuous look, that swept up and down the lanky man's frame from helmet to heel, and finally came to rest on the end of poor Bones' red nose.

"Ask the mess sergeant," said the cook gruffly, and went on ladling slum.

"Ain't you a nice kind of a guy!" thought Bones. "You oughta be in the Y. M. C. A." Aloud he said, "Where is the mess sergeant at?"

"I ain't his keeper," said the cook.

Bones looked helplessly around. The chow detail regarded him with sour looks and every evidence of lively dislike. Bones' wandering eye espied a tarpaulin at a little distance, and under the tarpaulin piles of bags and cans stacked in heaps. A man sat there eating noisily, and from the fact that he sat among the food supplies and from the fact that he ate, while the others were not yet fed, Bones deduced that this man was the mess sergeant. Bones started to go over to the tarpaulin, but after the first few steps he turned suddenly around, intending to tell Joe to wait. His helmet nearly left his head, so great was the wave of astonishment that smote his brain. The cook smiled upon Joe, who stood with goggling eyes and open mouth. The other men grinned encouragingly at the former K. P. and made extravagant and undecipherable gestures. The atmosphere of the group about the kitchen had changed from hostility to that of the utmost friendliness. As Bones' heart leaped with joy at this thought, the cook happened to catch his eye, and saw that Bones observed.

"Hem!" said the cook, and began to ladle slum as fast as he could. Then leaping upon the wheel of the kitchen, he began to bail coffee from a marmite with all the eager haste of a sailor bailing out a foundering rowboat. The chilled-air blast was turned on again, and the men of the ration detail retired into the collars of their overcoats.

"Now what the —— did I ever do to them?" thought Bones. Anger began to swell in his breast. "How the —— do they get that way, giving a guy a frost? I never done nothin' to them. Ah, that's the infantry for yuh. They ain't got no brains—if they had, they'd be in the artillery."

The mess sergeant looked up as Bones approached.

"I'm gonna eat dinner at your kitchen,"

said Bones defiantly. He fully expected an angry denial, but the mess sergeant merely shrugged his shoulders.

"I ain't stoppin' yuh, am I?" said he. "You gotta wait till them guys gets their cans full enough, though. We can't take no food away from the soldiers."

The mess sergeant slightly accented the word "soldiers," just enough to make Bones prick up his ears. He was about to inquire of the mess sergeant just what the —— he, the mess sergeant, took Bones to be—a congressman? But he thought that it would but result in fruitless conversation, so he desisted.

The chow detail filled their cans and departed. Food was taken into the trenches three times a day here, for it was a quiet front, and the Germans bothered the garrison of the sector very little. When the men had gone the cook turned to Bones.

"Got any mess-kits?" he inquired surlily.

"Nope," said Bones, "we're travelin' light."

The cook thereupon muttered something about wondering if these guys could feed themselves even, and rummaging in the kitchen-limber, discovered an extra mess-kit. The bottom part he handed to Joe, and the lid to Bones. The only tools he could find to accompany the mess-kit were a spoon and a knife. Bones drew the knife, to his bitter disgust. It would be a heart-breaking task to eat slum with a knife. Bones had his mess-kit lid filled with slum, drew a piece of bread, and filled his cup with coffee. He had his canteen on his pistol belt, and the cup fits over the bottom of the canteen, and is carried with it in the canteen cover. Joe had no cup, and so had to drink out of the opposite side of Bones'.

SOME more men appeared, their faces red and shining from the buffeting of the fall wind. They were probably drivers of water and ammunition carts, stable orderlies, or officers' strikers. They filed by the kitchen, had their mess-kits filled, and then sat about on the ground as near the kitchen as they could get. Bones paid them no heed. He was still raging from the cold reception he had received when he had applied for dinner, and his wrath burned high against all doughboys and dust disturbers of any nature whatsoever. Joe, however, engaged in conversation.

"Kinda cold, ain't it?" said Joe to the man next to him.

"Yup," said the man. "It's gonna be tough in these trenches this winter."

"Ain't gonna be no winter," spoke up another man. "I hear the war is about over. A dispatch rider was tellin' me we're goin' through them boche like a greased rag through a gun barrel."

"Yeh, I heard that," said Joe. "But there's a lot of ground in front of us that's got to be took. Lookit all them towns you can see from the road out there!"

The men all stopped eating and looked at Joe in astonishment.

"Why, where you been at?" asked one. "You comin' in or goin' out?"

Joe looked at them open-mouthed. Before he could think of anything to say, the cook leaned over the limber and rapping a cleaver on the wheel for emphasis, said:

"Boy, speakin' o' them towns down the valley, tonight's the night we visit 'em. How come you ain't heard about it? This here war is gonna be over in a week an' we're the guys that are goin' to end it. We'll end it startin' tonight."

Joe looked to see if Bones had heard, but that man had his face buried in his coffee mug. Joe had heard whispers from time to time about a new drive, a final, tremendous, all along the line shove that was to shatter the German army into fragments, but he had had no idea that this drive was to begin that night. It suddenly occurred to him that these men might be kidding him. They seemed sober enough. Again the ex-K. P. looked at Bones. Bones glowered into space and from time to time tried to scoop up a little slum with his knife. He was not oversuccessful. Joe meanwhile began to inwardly rejoice. If a drive were to start that night, then he and Bones could follow along in the rear of it, gleaning right and left. What better opportunity could there be for a souvenir hunter than to follow up a drive? Things were working out very well. Joe then enthusiastically conversed with the men regarding the time, direction, etc., of the coming attack. This they did not know, but during the conversation, Joe discovered that one of the men had a cousin in Turner's Falls, where Joe came from, and this cousin was known to Joe. The conversation became general, animated, and Joe was welcomed royally.

"What time's this thing gonna commence tonight?" he asked.

"We don't know," said the men, "because we're gonna be relieved outta here. New troops are gonna jump off."

"Where they gonna jump from?" asked Joe.

"Well," said the man that had the cousin that Joe knew, "you know where there's a communication trench runs down the road? Well, you folly that trench, and after a while you come to the support trenches; you'll know 'em cause they got duckboards in 'em. The next is a lot o' little alleys that run off to listenen' posts and the like o' that, and then finally you come to the front line, all mud. That's where the show begins."

"I'd like to see a show start," said Joe wistfully.

"Well, you go down there an' you'll see one tonight, believe us!"

Immediately there began a general discussion of the various drives already made by the American Army. None of these troops had taken part in a drive, they being a newly arrived division, but they had all heard about them. Joe was intensely interested. Bones, meanwhile, having finished his meal, and having tried to join in the conversation once or twice, with most discouraging results, at last gave up in despair.

"Come on," said he to Joe, "let's get outta here. We got a long way to go." Joe obediently got up, while the rest of the men scowled at Bones.

"What they got yuh fer?" whispered the cook as Joe returned him the mess-kit.

"What's who got me for?"

The cook jerked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of Bones.

Joe looked at the cook open-mouthed and then started to explain that Bones was his buddy, when a great light broke upon him. The cold reception Bones had received when he applied for food, the scowls and black looks that had been cast at him all through dinner were explained. Upon Bones' arm was the M. P.'s brassard, and these men thought him to be a real M. P. and Joe his prisoner.

"Huh!" said Joe. "I ain't in for much, just going absent a little while."

"That's tough business on the front," said the cook, shaking his head.

"I ain't worrying none," answered Joe, and saying farewell to the circle he and Bones went off through the woods.

"Bones," said Joe, when they were out of sight of the kitchen and on the edge of the highroad again, "you better take off that brassard. They think you're a M. P."

"Well, what would they think I was, a Sallie?"

"Suit yourself," said Joe, "but I wouldn't want to go round gettin' the hard eye everywhere I went if I was you."

"I don't mind them guys a bit," said Bone. "They ain't half so hard-boiled as some guy would be that wanted to know what kind of a picnic you an' me was on up here away from our outfits. Leave the M. P. on. Come on, let's go back and see where that communication trench by the road goes to."

They started off through the silent woods and Joe, looking idly about, saw a group of men paralleling their course. These woods were all of small second growth stock, with much brush, and it was difficult to see through them for any distance, but once in a while there would be a vista, through which one could see chow-guns, horses' tails waving, or unknown shapes covered with tarpaulins. It had not seemed a long way from the road when they had gone in looking for the chow-gun, but it seemed to be quite a way back. When they at last reached the roadside, Joe plucked at his comrade's sleeve.

"Bones," said he, "they's a bunch of guys follyin' us."

"How do you know?" asked Bones, looking earnestly at Joe and then over his shoulder.

"Every time I looked down one o' them alleys in the woods, I seen this same bunch. They didn't pay no attention to us that a guy would notice unless he was watchin', but after I began to look I could see 'em givin' us the eye—you know kinda sneakin' like, an' then they all hauled into the brush. Well, this last time I seen 'em they was real close an' one of 'em does like this"—Joe put his hands about his own throat and at the same time thrust out his tongue and goggled his eyes in imitation of the actions of a man being strangled.

"Was they M. P.'s?" asked Bones.

"Nope, I'm sure of that."

"Well, what would any one jump us for; we ain't got no money and we never done no one no harm."

"Maybe they crave to knock us for a loop because we're artillerymen. We dropped a few short ones on the trenches the other night."

"Let 'em come on," said Bones sourly, "an' I'll issue out a rap on the nose all around for 'em."

The two reached the communication trench and jumped down into it. It was colder in that trench than on the road and Bones wrapped his overcoat more tightly about his gaunt frame. He descended the slope first and Joe followed. It was slippery going, for the mud in the trench never dried out, and hence was in a semi-fluid state for some depth. Joe skidded, recovered himself, and opened his mouth to make profane comment. His eye at that moment lighting on the edge of the parapet, he saw the head of an American soldier projecting over, and regarding the two in the trench with intense interest. There was a sudden thud of feet, grunts, and while Joe's startled yell still rung in the air, the side of the trench cracked and buckled, letting fall an avalanche of dirt, stones, and men, who, kicking themselves rapidly loose from the lumps of clay, arose and fell upon the open-mouthed Bones, whom they bore to earth and muffled his bitter reproaches in an overcoat.

Joe leaped into the fray.

"What the —— are you jaspers trying to pull off here?" he cried. "Leggo that guy! Currycombed ——, you'd think we was a bunch o' Huns! Git offa him!"

A man who sat upon Bones' head turned about and made a gesture of silence to Joe.

"Beat it!" said this man in a husky whisper, "beat it while we keep his head covered!"

Joe recognized in the speaker the man whose cousin came from Joe's home town. Bones made muffled protest, and lashing out with one free foot, left the mark of hobnails on the nose of the man who held his other foot. This one gulped and retired up the trench in search of a piece of sand-bag to staunch the bleeding. The other men tightened their grip upon Bones.

"Beat it," they urged. "Beat it! We'll tie this guy up so he won't get untied till we're in Berlin. Git! Take his gun off him while you got the chance!"

One of the men deftly removed Bones' gun from its holster, and thrust it into his own belt.

"Give us the gun," said Joe. The man obediently handed it to him. A glance showed Joe that it was loaded. "Git offa him!" said Joe sternly, and he brought the gun to bear upon the men who held Bones. They arose promptly. None knew so well as those dough-boys what a hole a bullet from that gun would make in a man. Bones got to his feet and thought what he should say. Mentally he discarded word after word. None would meet the situation. It was one of the attackers who finally broke the silence.

"You're a great guy," said he to Joe. "We go tryin' to help you out an' you let us all in for a general court."

"A great time you'd have helpin' me out," scoffed Joe. "Go an' jump on my buddy an' try to tear his clothes all off his back!"

"Your buddy!" cried all.

"Yeh, my buddy," said Joe. "Who the —— else?" As the last word left his lips, his eye came to rest upon the left sleeve of Bones' coat, and upon a black brassard with the red letters "M. P." thereon.

"Ahem!" said Joe, coughing slightly. There was a heavy silence. The infantrymen, perplexed and wrathful, were still held in check by the menace of Joe's gun. The ex-cooks' police felt the red slowly climbing from neck to brow, while Bones, his anger suddenly vanished, grinned sheepishly, first at Joe and then at the other men.

"I ain't no M. P.," said he. "Him an' me is A. W. O. L. an' I pinched this brassard an' put it on so's we wouldn't get picked up. I better take it off before it gets me into any more trouble."

Bones turned and removed the brassard, which he threw on the ground. Joe stepped quickly forward and picked it up again.

"What d'yuh want that for?" asked Bones. "Ain't it brought us enough bad luck already?"

"It's a good souvenir," said Joe.

There was an immediate relaxation of tension and a feeling of friendliness that was like the warmth from a suddenly opened furnace door. The infantrymen heaved audible sighs, Joe sneaked his gun into his overcoat pocket, and drawing out cigarets, passed them around. When the smoke was arising in volume, one of the men suggested they adjourn to the parapet where the sun was warmer, and acting upon that suggestion, they all clambered out.

"You see," began the man with the

cousin, "we thought you was pinched, an' this guy was takin' you out to the pens. So we figured we'd jump on him an' get you away, an' then tie him up an' leave him for the relief to find. He wouldn't know us from Adam, an' by the time he come to an' got loose we might be in Paris for all he knew. We're gettin' relieved tonight, an' he wouldn't be found till some time next mornin'. Well, when you birds started toward the front we didn't know what to make of it, but we come along the trench just the same. We was goin' to crown him with an ax handle, but all these spectators come surgin' up an' caved in the trench, an' upset the beans. Why the —— didn't you say you was absent an' all that when you was eatin' dinner? You ain't goin' the right way. You're goin' toward the front."

"That's where we want to go," said Bones.

"Huh?" cried the company. They all offered comment.

"Up to the front? Them guys are crazy."

"What the —— they want to go up to the front for?"

"There's somethin' phony about the whole —— business. First this guy's a M. P., then he's the other guy's buddy, then they're A. W. O. L., then they're on their way to the front. I betcha the both of 'em are boche spies tryin' to get back. I'm for turnin' 'em in."

"Aw, boche spies ——! Whoever heard of a boche spy livin' in Turners Falls, for ——'s sake?"

"Naw, these guys are all right, only maybe too much coneyac. Them artillerymen get too much hard liquor, bein' back so far. It ain't good for 'em."

"Wait now," said one of the infantrymen finally. "What's the big idea you're so crazy to get to the front?"

"Well," said Bones, "the war's about over an' we ain't seen much of it, only done gas guard and cooks' police, an' we got kinda sore at our outfit, an' so we thought we'd go up an' see what war was like."

"Don't you get no war in the artillery?"

"Not a —— of a lot. Once in a while a shell comes over an' every one turns out to look at it an' dig around in the hole to see can they find the fuse, an' pick up hunks of it to take home an' show the girls an' say it was the piece they was wounded with, an' maybe we see a air fight once in a while. I seen one this morning was a peach only our guys got the worst of it. Well, bein' sore at doin' K. P. an' gettin' bawled out, why we figured we needed a little change, so we come up."

The man who had departed to find a piece of sandbag to stanch his bleeding nose with returned and viewed all with astonishment. The situation was explained and he sat down to smoke. The front of his blouse was well covered with blood and he looked as if he had just returned from a very sanguinary encounter.

"Whyncha go back an' tell 'em you bit a boche to death an' maybe get a medal an' a month's leave?" asked one of the men. "You're bloodier than Lafferty ever thought o' bein'."

There was such hearty laughter at this remark that Joe expressed curiosity as to the reason of the merriment.

"Aw, we had a guy in the outfit named Lefty Lafferty," said one of the men, "an' he was doin' liaison with the third platoon one night. Well, he come back to us about noon the next day all covered with blood an' his face all tore to —— an' let on he had had a hand-to-hand fight with a boche. Well, knowin' him like we did, we didn't git all sweat up over it, an' sure enough, in about an hour the runner from the third platoon was over an says there was a guy in his platoon had one o' them safety razor things to cut your hair with. It's like a safety razor, only it ain't. Well, Lafferty havin' some time on his hands wanted to shave, but didn't have no razor, so he happens to find this hair-cutter under his hand, so he knuckles it, thinkin' it was a razor, an' goes' an' tries to shave with it. Oh, man! His face looked like a map o' the trenches in this sector. Believe me, he got razzberries for dessert every meal after that."

"If you two birds really want to go to the front," said the man with the cousin, after a pause, "I know a better way than camouflaging yourselves as M. P.'s. There's lots o' coils o' wire layin' around where the telephone guys got sick o' carryin' it, an' you two guys can each take one an' then if any one says anything, tell 'em you're telephone men layin' wire, an' you lost your lootenant. Then you can go anywheres you want to an' see all the front you can see in a day's walk. You better get out before dark though, because they're pullin' off a show tonight, an' it might or might not be a hit. Anyway, you don't want to have no

orchestra seat, 'cause they throw vegetables around real mean, I ain't kiddin' yuh."

This plan received hearty endorsement from the other men. There was no element of danger contained in it. No one held grudges against telephone men, and it was not the least unusual to find men with a coil of wire across their shoulders wandering here and there with a vacant and anxious look and no knowledge of their whereabouts, save that they were somewhere in France.

"Well," said the man who seemed to be the leader of the infantrymen, "it's time we was gettin' back. We gotta make up packs an' things, an' the top kick will be moanin' around wantin' to know where we was, so it's time we was on the way. I wish you guys good luck, but keep your heads down."

THE infantry, agreeing with the last speaker, got stiffly to their feet and brushing off the particles of clay and mud on their clothes that were within reach, filed slowly back up the road.

"Now what?" asked Joe, when the doughboys were out of sight.

"Us to find that wire," said Bones, and the two of them clambered back into the trench and continued the descent to the front line.

At the foot of the hill the communication trench ended at another ditch that ran diagonally across. There was no difference between the two except that the communication trench, being on slope, was not as full of water as the other, which was on a level.

"This is a nice place," said Joe. "All we need is a boat."

The two stood in the communication trench and surveyed the soupy appearance of the intersecting trench. Its brown walls were crumbling, a few shreds of tattered, rotting sandbag fluttered from the parapet, and several strings of telephone wire were untidily pegged to the earth wall. The afternoon sun was already obscured by the woods on the high ground to the west, and a chill dampness had taken possession of the trench. There was no sign of any garrison, no evidence of occupany, just the cold and the smell of mud, and once in a while a tiny splash as a bit of mud fell from the crumbling wall into the water.

"Do you suppose this is the front?" asked Bones, in a husky whisper.

"I don't know," said Joe. "It must be, it's the bottom of the hill."

"Lookit all the souvenirs," said Bones.

"Aw, shut up, for ——'s sake," replied Joe. "What the —— do you expect, a whole —— department store? I suppose you think they got Lugers and belts and six-inch guns laid out in rows for a guy to just step up an' help himself. Anyways, I don't think this is the front line. I don't see no dugouts nor wire nor nothing."

"Yeh, you're like all them salesmen. 'Looka this swell solid mahogany real-leather upholstery couch.' An' when you take it home it's made outta pine and upholstered with linoleum. An' when you make a kick, the guy asks you what the —— you expect for five-fifty. 'Come up the front,' says you, 'an' let's get a flock o' souvenirs.' All the souvenirs we'll get will be about a ton o' this front line on each shoe."

He displayed a foot so encrusted with mud that it looked like an elephant's.

"I don't believe this is the front anyways," said Joe. "There ain't no guards nor nothing. Why, the boche could come over here and go right through to G. H. Q. without no trouble at all."

"Let's toss up a franc," suggested Bones, "an' if it comes down heads it's the front and if it comes down tails, it ain't."

Joe made no reply, but looked about for a dry place to cross the trench. He saw none, so made a floundering leap, splashing water all over his overcoat, and landed upon the far side of the trench. There was a pile of dirt there, where the corner had been caved in by a shell. Intersections of trenches, like road forks, are good targets, and at some distant time Jerry had registered a hit on this one. Joe, not without effort, clambered to the parapet, and rose to his knees. After a long look he turned to Bones.

"This is it," he called, "come on over an' see."

Bones splashed across and joined his companion. Before them was a stretch of untidy meadow, with heaps of dirt here and there, and a great deal of rank grass. There was considerable rusty wire, for the most part hidden by the weeds, but visible here and there. At the far side of the meadow was a clump of trees, beyond them a belt of woods, and at the far side of the woods, the remnants of a village.

"An' there," said Joe, pointing, "is a good souvenir."

At their feet almost, just this side of a wisp of wire, was the broken half of a rusty rifle. Neither of them could tell if it was of French or German manufacture, and it was such a rusty forlorn looking object that they did not care to take the trouble to go down and examine it more closely.

"Let's go along a ways," suggested Joe, "and see what we can find. I didn't see no coil o' wire layin' around, did you?"

"No," said Bones, "I didn't. Maybe there's some farther along. Say, what's to prevent one o' them squareheads tryin' to qualify as expert by sockin' a bullet into us, with us wanderin' round here in broad daylight?"

"Aw, they won't bother a guy none," said Joe. "They can see we ain't armed. They're only waitin' for the war to be over anyway. Come on, let's see can we find that wire an' then we'll hunt for some belts an' things."

"I think we better hunt for a place to flop," objected Bones. "It's gonna be night pretty quick an' it'll rain an' us far from home an' friends."

"Well, we'll find a nice warm dugout," said Joe hopefully. "This is better than bein' cooks' police, anyway."

They went slowly off along the parapet. From time to time they came to trenches that crossed their path, but they were narrow and easily jumped over. Some of them were obviously abandoned, their sides overgrown with grass and their bottoms filled with a mass of tin cans and tangled wire. These trenches communicated with the German system, and were thus blocked to prevent their being used as an avenue of approach to the American lines. The two men slipped along, looking about them for booty, but finding nothing except such articles as the various garrisons of the trench had tossed over the parapet. The legs of rubber boots, empty bandoliers, tin cans innumerable, empty machine gun clips, a broken shovel, a steel helmet without a lining. All of these were of American make and useless as souvenirs, as Bones bitterly pointed out.

The Germans in this sector were peaceably inclined. Their trenches were as lightly manned as those of the Americans, the garrison spending the day in very comfortable shelter in the woods or in the ruined town and manning their defences at night. They had, however, a few sentries in observation, more for the sake of discipline than for any other reason, and these sentries, perceiving Bones and Joe, promptly reported the fact to their superiors. Americans wandering loose in front of their trenches were not common. The two Americans were examined and their movements studied with some surprize.

The ground between the two armies was all interwoven and crisscrossed with trenches that had been dug and abandoned and reopened and closed again, and the two Americans, following what they thought was their front line, drew gradually nearer and nearer the German wire. This was taken to be a suspicious circumstance by the watchers, and taking into account the warnings he had received relative to a prospective attack, the German non-com who had his glasses on the two decided it was time for a gentle reminder.

"Do you know where you're goin'?" asked Bones, coming to a sudden halt.

"No, nor I don't care, do you?" replied Joe. "So long as I ain't within sound of the kitchen an' there ain't a pile o' greasy pans waitin' for me to try to clean with cold water, I ain't particular."

"Well, I ain't either," said Bones, "but I'd kinda like to find a place to sleep where I wouldn't have to play I was a mermaid. Sleepin' half in an' half outta water gets tiresome —— soon. You hunt for them Lugers an' field-glasses; I'll keep my eye peeled for a good old G. I. horse blanket."

"You got a kerosene mess sergeant's chance in —— o' findin' blankets up here," remarked Joe.

"I'll find 'em before you do them Lugers an' things." Bones stopped to skirt an old shell hole that was half full of chocolate-colored water. *Zzzip!* The water in that shell hole leaped into air, spattered all over Bones and then fell back into white foam.

Bones halted so suddenly he nearly fell on his face. That was a bullet, and said bullet had been meant for him. If he had not checked his stride just as he did, he would now be rapidly winging his way to stand in line and await the issue of a robe and harp. Joe had disappeared utterly. An unseen hand plucked at the breast of Bones' overcoat, but there was no arm visible behind the hand, nor any one who could have given

him such a tug. A muffled voice rose from Bones' feet.

"Fer the love o' —— come offa that parapet!"

Then Bones, his senses returning, took a leap into space and landed with tremendous sound of falling waters in a trench just at his left hand. Dirt flowed down from above, and a great piece of clay smote him on the back. He scrambled to his feet, and perceived Joe regarding him with a very white face and very round eyes.

"Come in here," said Joe. "Did he hit yuh?"

"—— no!" gasped Bones. "But he made the closest miss he ever made in his life. It went through my coat."

"Well, come in here," urged Joe. "I jumped down and jumped right into the warmest little parlor a man ever see." Then he withdrew, like a woodchuck into a hole.

"Hey!" protested Bones, "do you know I just come within a inch o' bein' killed?"

"Come in an' forget it," came the reply in muffled tones. Bones thereupon lifted the blanket that covered a hole in the bank, and peered in. Joe's face was illuminated by a match that he held to the wick of a lantern. The oil caught the flame and Joe snapped shut the globe with a grunt of satisfaction. Then he hung the lantern to a hook made of wire suspended from a piece of railroad iron that supported the roof.

"What's this?" gasped Bones.

"Wait till I look an' I'll tell yuh," answered Joe. "I just come in ahead of you. All I know about this place is that it's got a nice new board floor and it's dry as a bone."

The two looked about them. The lantern's light revealed a cement roof supported by railroad iron, but the sides of the dugout were sheathed with wood. Along the back was a wide bunk, made of wire netting, containing a bed sack newly stuffed with hay, and four or five O. S. blankets neatly folded. There was a table in the center, and three chairs. The floor was new, and the men's artillery training told them that it was made of the blue boxes that .75 shells come in.

"Well, well," exclaimed Joe, "if this ain't complete!" This remark was inspired by the sight of a box nailed to the wall, so as to form a shelf. Within the box were several cans of hash or bully beef, three loaves of bread, some hardtack in tins, much jam, at least half a dozen cans, a box of candles, and a dozen or so packages of very toothsome French cookies called "Biscuits Cadoret."

"Lookit here!" replied Bones with enthusiasm. On his side of the dugout was a fireplace and chimney and in the fireplace was a rusty circular stove, beside which was a pile of kindling-wood. "Joe," continued Bones, "I fergive yuh all yuh ever done to me for findin' this place. How'd yuh ever do it?"

"I give a jump when that bullet come crackin' over and jumped right in front o' the door. Well, my only thought was to get under cover, so I dived in. Soon as I seen it was a dugout I hollered for you to come in. Then I stood up and clanked my tin derby on that lantern. This is soft. We can hang out here nights, eatin' this chow an' keepin' ourselves warm with that fire, and days we can hunt for things an' wait for the war to get over. It'll be over any day now, I got it straight from a guy that knows what he's talkin' about."

"Uh!" said Joe, "but how come all this luxury with no one enjoyin' it? Suppose some guy owns this place an' comes an' kicks us out?"

"It's abandoned," said Joe. "You heard them dough-boys we had dinner with say that no one lived in these trenches? They all hang out up the hill there. What's the use of defendin' a lot o' muddy ditches when you can sit up on a dry hill an' pot Jerry the minute he comes out of his dugout?"

"Well, let's have a meal an' a fire," said Bones, and forthwith he set himself to kindle a blaze in the stove.

THE two men opened some of the food and heated it on the stove. They had no mess-kits and could find none in the dugout, so they had to use pieces of hardtack to dig the canned hash out of the tin, and the hardtack served them as plate and fork both. After supper they felt thirsty and Bones explored his canteen in which there was a very little water. This he and Joe drank, and Bones remarked that he must replenish the supply in the morning. Then they sat about and smoked, and after a while betook themselves to the big bed, into which they both got, and rolling up in the blankets, expressed entire satisfaction with the first day of their vacation.

"Joe," said Bones suddenly, "did it occur

to you what them doughboys said—'There's goin' to be a drive tonight'?"

"What of it?" asked Joe.

"Well, we must be kinda far up in the line an' it might not be healthy around here durin' a drive. Our guns fire short sometimes, you know."

"Git up an' blow out the lantern," said Joe, "an' go to sleep. We ain't gonna be in no drive, but tomorrow we'll get up an' watch the battle an' pick up a whole flock o' helmets an' stuff."

"You're full o' hop," said Bones, getting out of the bed, "they don't wear helmets no more, the boche don't."

He blew out the lantern and then retired. Shortly the two men slept.

In the small hours of the morning Bones awoke and was moved by an irresistible impulse to go without the dugout and see what the weather was like. He pulled aside the curtain at the entrance and as he did so, a chill gust of rain blew in his face.

"Ugh!" he muttered, "a nice night." The rain was coming down in enthusiastic style. The water was already half a foot deep in the trench and the rain pattered on its surface with a most discouraging sound. Overhead was a rustling, swishing sound that Bones first thought was caused by the rain, but he discovered that he heard it only when the wind did not blow, in other words when the rain was not being driven against the walls of the trench, and he thereupon decided that this stealthy rushing sound was something else. What? When the solution came to him he nearly fell out of the dugout into the trench.

"Hey, Joe!" he cried, "git up! The drive's begun. Listen to the bombardment!" Joe immediately arose. Both soldiers having slept fully dressed, even to their overcoats, Joe could step from the bed to the door of the dugout, which he did, and thrust a sleepy face into the rain.

"Duck!" cried Joe, "duck! Here comes the Army!"

He immediately retired into the dugout and pulled the blanket across the door. From the trench came a tremendous and irregular sound of splashing. Joe on one side and Bones on the other, one eye to the crack between blanket and door casing, could see dim shapes passing along the trench, and hear the steady sound of many feet going down into the water and being pulled out again. The men that passed before the dugout were infantry in full pack. No sound came from them save the splashing of the feet and the rasp of their slickers against the wall of the trench.

The men in the dugout could not see the marchers, but they knew that the unseen infantry were weary beyond belief. A man would give a tired grunt now and then, or a soft sigh, but that was all. They were too tired to swear. These were the new troops, come in to relieve the garrison of the sector, and had probably been marching all night. Bones had thought that the column would pass by in a short time, but it still continued to splash along the trench. The line seemed endless.

"Come on back to bed," said Joe finally. "Didn't yuh never see doughboys marchin' before?"

Bones, without reply, turned about and started to grope his way back to the bunk. A blast of cold air mingled with rain beat upon the back of his neck, there was a sound of wild splashing at the door, and the next instant the clatter of feet on the floor of the dugout. Bones turned, collided with a man and felt the night air in his face. He could hear more feet clambering into the dugout, and hear clothing rustling.

"Here we are, thank God," said a voice. "Show a light here till I find the lantern. A man needs a diving suit a night like this."

A beam from an electric torch lighted the dugout, the lantern was unhooked and lighted, and three officers in streaming trench coats stood revealed to the eyes of the two artillerymen. The officers were no less surprized than the two privates; in fact they were more so. No one said a word for some seconds.

"Well, hello!" said an officer finally, "are you men the guides?"

"Yessir," said Bones.

What or who the guides were he had no idea, but he immediately decided that all the luxury in this dugout belonged to these officers, and if they expected to find guides in it, then Bones would be a guide. The hour of reckoning might thus be postponed until he and Joe could make their escape.

"Well, if you are," said one of the other officers, "I'll say you made yourselves —— well at home. Look at this, Lawford!"

The last speaker had gone over to the bunk and was surveying the tumbled blankets on it. Then he stepped to the box of

provisions and nodded his head with grimness, as if he assured himself that his surmise had been correct.

"Yessir," he continued, "they've eaten the chow and slept in the bed and burned all the fuel, I'll bet. I'd put 'em under arrest and start 'em right back to the mill!"

Across the dugout Joe's agonized glance sought Bones', but neither found any comfort in the other's look.

The three officers looked at each other with no more joy than expressed by the two soldiers. One sat upon the bunk and wiped the water from his face.

"Collins," said he, "the Old Man will have our scalps for this. Here his chow is all eaten up, his bed slept in and probably full of coots by now, and the firewood all gone."

"No, sir, it ain't," said Joe, "we didn't burn but a little."

No one heeded him save Bones, who groaned aloud.

"I said all along," remarked the officer named Lawford, "that we should have put a guard on this place. Then this wouldn't have happened."

"That's a bright thought now," said the third officer, "but where would we get a guard, and what would prevent him from going to sleep in the bed, and eating the sacred goldfish, and burning the sacred firewood? Make up the bed, build another fire, and hope the Old Boy won't notice it."

"Also prefer charges against these two vandals," suggested Lawford.

"I wouldn't," said the third man, whom Bones made up his mind to like. "Remember they are our guides and they might lead us up and down in front of some friendly machine-gun, thus effectually putting a stop to our appearing against them."

At this point, Joe, taking a deep breath, appeared about to speak, but catching Bones' burning glance, he desisted. Joe apparently had been about to make a clean breast of the affair, but Bones still had some nerve left. While there was life there was hope. If he was to be a guide, well and good. He knew as much about the lay of the land as the people he was to guide, and certainly it could not be very difficult to find the front line. Moreover, there was always a chance of escape in the darkness if the need arose, but a confession in the dugout would only lead to immediate incarceration.

Outside in the trench the steady splashing continued. The officers unbuckled their map cases and, having remarked darkly that when the Old Man arrived he would see to the two who had made themselves at home in his dugout, they went to work under the lantern, pointing here and there with pencils, and consulting typewritten sheets of orders. The two soldiers, separated by the dugout, could do nothing but look at each other and hope that they would get a chance for an interchange of views before the arrival of the Old Man, whoever he might be. This dugout with all its luxury had been prepared for some spectator who was to have a box seat for the coming show, and who might be any one from the Secretary of War down.

"Ha-ha!" cried a deep voice, "is this the place? Well, I'm —— glad to get here." The blanket was pulled aside and held by some one without. A tall man, the water pouring from him in cataracts, entered and the three officers straightened to attention. Bones and Joe, having been standing anyway, had nothing to do but look. The newcomer had a mustache from which the water ran. Other than that they could see nothing of his face.

"I'll have a cigar, I guess," said the newcomer. "Got plenty of time, haven't I? All here, are we? Scout, gas, and liaison officer? Good. Artillery's outside. Going on up with the third battalion; they need him more than I will. Who are these two men—runners?"

"These are guides, sir," said Captain Lawford. He had taken off his tin hat and put on his trench cap, on which was the insignia of his rank.

"What for guides?" asked the man with the mustache.

"As I understand the plan of the attack," said the captain, "the woods called the Bois de la Marjolaine are to be enveloped, one battalion being led to the Franchee de la Giraffe and the other going in from Position H 4."

"That's right. Then what?"

"Why, sir, those battalions will need guides; they can't run around in this darkness in a strange sector and such a crosshatch of trenches as there are here without getting lost, so these guides were left behind by the troops whom we relieved, to show us the way. I might state that that section of trenches is the toughest to find one's way

around in, even in broad daylight, that I have ever encountered."

The mustached man looked at his watch.

"Time's gettin' short," said he. "First battalion is due here in five minutes. The Thirty-Ninth is still going by, but they must be pretty well along by now. After them two M. G. sections, then us."

He bent over a map and the other officers did likewise. Bones, catching Joe's eye, made a slight motion of his head toward the dugout door, and began to imperceptibly draw away in that direction. Guide a battalion! The worst place to get lost in on the front! Not for Bones. Once outside the door he could mingle with the marchers. Go where they would, the consequences could not be so bad as if he took a battalion out and lost it. Joe skirted the group at the table, and as Bones cautiously drew back the blanket, the two ducked out. The upper part of their bodies protruded into the trench, but their feet stayed in the dugout, due to the fact that three soldiers sat on the threshold and a perfect wall of them lined the side of the trench. Those who sat on the dugout step had fixed bayonets and these came about on the level with the fleeing men's chests.

"Hi!" cried a voice from within the dugout, "where are you men going?"

"We ain't goin' nowhere, sir," said Joe.

"We was just goin' to have a smoke, sir," said Bones, as he and Joe retired into the dugout again.

The officers registered indignation.

"Stick right around!" said one, "never mind smoking now. We'll need you in a minute or two."

There was a stir outside in the trench, faint splashings drew nearer, and another man that looked as if he had just arisen from the depths of the sea drew aside the soggy blanket and stumbled in.

"Sir," said he saluting, "the battalion is here."

"Good," said Captain Lawford. "Here is your guide, all ready for you."

"Guide?" said the mustached man. "Oh, huh! Listen, I've been thinking this over. I'm no man to depend on guides. I distinctly stated that I didn't want any guides left behind. There are only two kinds of guides, those that lose the way, and those that don't know it anyway. I told Colonel Allen I didn't want any guides. Yet I find two here. They look to me like a pair of jailbirds. What outfit are you men from?"

Joe remembered frantically the number of the regiment that had given him his dinner. He had seen it on the ration card and the rolling kitchen.

"The Eighty-Fourth Infantry, sir," said Joe.

"Well, that's the right outfit. Well, I don't like the looks of it. You come in here and make yourselves at home in my dugout—don't deny it, I see the signs of it—and then tell me you're guides. I have my doubts. You may be spies for all I know. You don't look it, I'll say that. You don't look as if you had brains enough to be spies, but the Germans are clever at that sort of thing, I hear. Well, we'll take you right along with us and look into this more deeply tomorrow."

HE GOT to his feet, clicked the snaps of his slicker, and went out, followed by the two soldiers, the newcomer, and the silent staff. The party went into the trench, like seals into a tank, and the men there, seemingly without command, stirred, rattled, coughed, and began to splash along the trench in the wake of the group of officers.

"Here's war for yuh," husked Bones in Joe's ear.

"Ain't it the truth. What d'yuh suppose the old bird with the mustache will do to us?"

"He won't do nothin'," said Bones. "We'll duck away from him the first chance we get. We won't be in no danger. Them colonels never take chances."

"I'm glad o' that," said Joe. "I wonder how far we are from the front."

"We ain't far. Remember that guy took a crack at me yesterday afternoon an' we jumped in that dugout? It's comin' daylight! Lookit the sky!"

Sure enough, the sky overhead was a dull gray. In the trench it was still dark, but the outline of the untidy crumbling parapet was clearly visible. There was a sound audible now, that was like the crash of breaking seas on a beach. The men in the trench began to mutter among themselves, but Joe and Bones being artillery men, guessed immediately what the sound was. It was a barrage, either their own or the enemy's. If it was their own, then it was time they deployed.

There was a moment's halt and the officers conferred with satisfaction. The march

began again and the two privates followed the officers up a sharp slope. A cold wind blew in their faces. They were on a stretch of open ground, with woods in front of them and very near. The men coming from the trench deployed and began to move off into the rain. The air was full of twinkling lights that glowed with a sickly pallor in the light of dawn, and among these lights were red and green rockets, fired by the enemy for artillery assistance.

Ahead rumbled the barrage and on all sides were troops going forward, seemingly without organization, just walking along at wide intervals. There was an undercurrent to the drumming of the barrage, a sharp rattling, though quite faint. Machine-guns were going somewhere.

Bong! went a distant shell. *SLAM!* One right in front of them, whereat they all hurled themselves into the mud. *Berroomp!* Two close together a little way to the right. There was faint whistling and some men calling to each other, probably asking for first aid. The group of officers halted.

"Now for some deep stuff!" remarked the colonel. "The ball is open. I'm glad I came. Nice of you boys to fix me up a cozy dugout, but I'm too old a soldier to stay in it. I like to see the fun. I've got a friend up here somewhere."

He took something from his pocket and held it aloft. Joe, watching, saw a beam of light shoot straight up into the air, making the rain-drops glitter, and this beam made small circles for the space of half a minute. The colonel was signaling to some one with a flash-light.

"Oh man, we'll get plastered now if Jerry sees that light," gasped Bones.

He and Joe both heard it coming the same instant and went to earth in a shower of muddy water. There was a sound as of a falling house. It rushed nearer and nearer—*BOOM!* a deep sound over their heads. The two artillerymen thought of shrapnel, but shrapnel made a sharp bang, and this thing hummed. Joe essayed to look up. There was no sound of flying iron, but the humming continued.

"Hey, Bones," said he, "that there is a plane. The Old Man was signalin' to a plane to come down."

Bones turned up his one eye, the other being full of mud, and sure enough, through the mist and the rain he could make out a ghostly shape turning and twisting over their heads. This was a contact plane, to follow the regimental command group and transmit any messages that they might send to it by means of pieces of cloth disposed in various shapes on the ground. The command group, not having flopped when the plane cut in its motor, was some distance away. The two artillerymen got to their feet and began to slide and slip across the field after the officers. The command group suddenly leaped asunder, smoke billowed, mud flew. One officer was hit and lay where he had fallen, but the others disappeared. The place where they had been was blotted out in black smoke.

The Germans, while the light was still so poor, could not make out the direction of the attack, nor could they distinguish the forms of officers, machine-gunners, and trench mortar batteries. These, and a fleet of fat tanks on one flank would come in for attention later. At present, the artillery observers and snipers had to strain their eyes into the murk, or else fire blindly into No Man's Land with no definite target. What a joy it was to them to see, first the beam of the electric light shooting skyward, then the appearance of the plane and its twisting progress above the American lines. Beneath that plane must be a command group, and its position was well marked by the light. Arrived tokens from every battery and machine-gun in that sector. The exact location of the group was not known, but all the area where it might be was well combed, and if the group was not destroyed, it would not be for lack of attention on the enemy's part.

At the first burst, Joe went one way and Bones another. Bones landed in a shell-hole, which being newly made was dry, but still reeking with the smell of high explosive powder. Bones curled up his legs and was glad for once that he was thin and hence presented so small a target. Shells shrieked and howled about him and one burst with stunning force quite near and showered him with great chunks of dirt.

"By ——," thought Bones, "they might give a man a little warning before they start a battle. Here we're right in the thick of this thing before we know it."

Bones forgot entirely that he was a private of artillery, that he was disgruntled and dissatisfied with the Army in general and the front in particular. He felt only the

thrill that comes with action, and the realization that the danger of sudden and glorious death is very great. He kept his head down, protected by his arms, and listened to the clanging and buzzing of the shells.

The German mind seems to be lacking in imagination. Here a command group of Americans had been located and a salvo of shells fired at them. Now if the command group had been wiped out at the first discharge, subsequent shelling was a waste of ammunition. If they had not been wiped out, they would be far from the spot at the second salvo, and the distance would increase with every second. The Germans, not realizing this, continued to hurl shell after shell at the place where the colonel had flashed his light. The plane of course still hovered, but a man in a plane can see around quite a circle, and it is impossible to tell from the position of the plane where the ground unit is that it is working with.

After about fifteen minutes the shelling ceased in that particular area and Bones rose to his knees. There was no sign of the command group. The light was much better now on that muddy plain and Bones could see machine-gunners, stretcher bearers, tanks, telephone men, and miscellaneous, all going forward at very wide intervals. So that was what an attack looked like. Those lines were pretty thin, but there were a lot of men in sight. No waving flags, though, such as Bones had been in the idealistic pictures before he came overseas. He heard no one giving war cries, no singing—huh? Was that song? It sounded like it. Bones listened. Sure enough, some one was singing. There was a chorus of many lusty voices and by the sound they sang from the heart. Here, then, was *one* outfit that had put to some use the many hours spent in the training camps in learning how to sing. Bones cupped his hand behind his ear, all thought of banging shells and cracking bullets forgotten. The song was growing clearer as the troops advanced, but the words were indistinguishable. Abruptly, with a final shout, the song ended.

"Ain't that my luck," said Bones, "to hear a gang sing and not hear a word they was singin'. No one will ever believe me when I tell 'em. There they go again!"

The singers were nearer now and several were singing a solo. Bones could see who they were and likewise hear the words.

Gangway for a hard-boiled crew!
Here come the engineers!
Forward to win the war; that's what we enlisted for,
Yes, it is—I should hope to kiss a pig!
Oh, the doughboys have their fun,
And the infantry can run,
But all the engineers can do is dig!

The men roared a chorus that made every man in the sector, German and Yank, turn around and look.

Oh, —— the infantry, likewise the artillery
Also the signal corps, the truck trains, and the tanks.
Oh, those dirty, dirty boys
It's for them—

These men were engineers, coming up armed with pick and shovel to repair roads, bridge trenches, fill sand-bags, tear up wire, and do all sorts of disagreeable things. They ceased their singing, for they had come under machine-gun fire, and had moreover reached a line of trenches that had to be bridged, so they saved their breath, and began casting down the bridges, which they had carried on their backs.

"Here's where I lost the colonel," said Bones. He ran down a slope in the opposite direction from which he had last seen the command group, and not a second too soon, for a very black and ugly looking cloud of smoke spouted from the very spot he had left.

Bones entered a wall of smoke, expecting that he would soon pass through it, but such was the condition of the air that the smoke clung to the ground and lay about heavily. It was the remains of the barrage that the Americans had laid on the front line and intermixed with it had been smoke bombs, so that now there was a vast heavy curtain, from which came strange and horrible sounds. Bones began to run and fell into an empty trench. He scrambled out on the other side, his mouth full of mud, and found himself in a little field, surrounded by woods. The smoke was not so thick here and he paused a moment to get his breath. A ton of bricks fell from the sky and Bones promptly hurled himself to the ground.

"Man!" he gasped, getting up.

He heard a foot crunch beside his ear and his startled eye discovered a leather boot, and above the boot a gray trouser leg. Bones grabbed for his gun, and his hand slapped an empty holster. Lost! No, Joe had it, had had it since the afternoon before

when the men had jumped on Bones thinking him an M. P. and had taken his gun away from him and given it to Joe. Bones thereupon hurled himself at the gray-clad legs and he and their owner rolled in the mud. The German was first on his feet, however, being heavier than Bones, but he did not wait to renew the conflict. When Bones arose he was gone, fleeing into the fog.

"Hah!" roared Bones. "Ooo ——!" he added under his breath, for he perceived four more advancing upon him. He had a mild wonder as to how he would be found and if he would be buried here or taken back to the artillery cemetery, but with the thought came a determination to shed some blood first, even unarmed though he was. He leaped at the four Germans, caught one flush on the jaw with a right hook, seized the throat of the other with a deathlike grip, and went to earth with him. The remaining two fled. The man under Bones went limp with surprizing suddenness and Bones arose.

"Wahoo!" he bellowed. "I kill 'em with my naked hands. Bring on your Huns."

A hurried glance around showed him another group, who regarded him fearfully. He made for them, but Bones in his turn was bounced against the ground with at least three men on top of him.

"What the —— are you pullin' off here?" asked a voice. "Ain't you the wild Indian though? *Tarzan o' the Apes*, that's you, huh?"

"Lemme up," said Bones, "I didn't know you was takin' movies!"

"Movies ——!" said the men, suffering him to rise. "We'll movie you!"

When Bones got to his feet he discovered three very muddy men in rubber boots, unarmed, who regarded him with hostility. Also there was a fourth, a very small boy, hardly over twelve by his looks, but nevertheless garbed in an American uniform, an ammunition belt, and carrying a bayoneted rifle as large as himself.

"You cheap ——," he piped at Bones, "you leave my prisoners alone or I'll shove about a yard o' this bayonet down your throat!"

"Whyncha heave a slug into him anyway," asked the muddy men, "'stead o' botherin' us? We got work to do; we can't go runnin' around rescuin' German prisoners from nuts all day."

"I don't want to kill no guy that ain't right in his head," replied the small boy, "but these here bushes all surrendered to me and I don't want 'em hurted. Why, he comes curvin' in here like he was Daniel in the lion's den, and goes to chokin' 'em an' everything."

"Git a first-aid guy," suggested some one, "an' give him a shot o' coke; an' take him away; he's off his noodle."

"I'm all right," said Bones, the red mounting to his hair. "I didn't know these guys was prisoners. I come in outta the fog an' here they come at me."

The muddy men, without further comment other than much giggling among themselves, turned and trotted back to their duty.

"Well, if you ain't the ——!" said the small boy, and waving his arm in a magnificent gesture, he gathered his flock of prisoners again and moved off with them. Bones hoped that a shell would sail in and flatten the whole works, but none sailed, and Bones at last went off sadly toward the woods.

THERE was a belt of wire about these woods and this Bones had trouble in crossing. The wire had been torn up by the bombardment, but it lay about in great loops and was always catching at his puttees, or hooking into his coat. Beyond the wire was a battered trench, all trace of parapet gone, so that what had once been a neat defense system was now nothing but an untidy ditch littered with gray overcoats, gas-masks, bits of timber and twisted sheets of corrugated iron. There was a dull silence in these woods and Bones felt inclined to retreat, but he hesitated to negotiate the wire again and so went forward, following the parapet of a communication trench. It was quite dark in those woods due to the smoke and a sort of mist that arose from them.

A machine-gun buzzed on the left hand, and as Bones moved to the right to avoid such a dangerous vicinity, the woods suddenly ended and he found himself upon the edge of a road. The road continued on across a field, at the far end of which was a farm. On either side of the road were machine-guns enveloped in a slight haze of powder gas, and behind the guns were kneeling infantrymen, their rifle butts resting on the ground and their bayonets

pointing skyward. The riflemen regarded the field beyond the edge of the woods, where shells bloomed almost as thickly as stocks of corn. The prospect was not cheering. They might very well cross the field, for shell-fire is not as bad as it looks, but there was the farm, and that farm would be full of machine-guns. Trenches would radiate from the wall that would be yet fuller, and all these guns would lay down a curtain of bullets that a mosquito would have difficulty in flying through. Bones noticed thankfully that the rain had stopped and that the first rays of the sun were lighting the field. At least the bullets would not have to be fought in the rain.

"Now, then," muttered Bones, "let's get outta here."

He went back along the road, keeping well in the ditch, for the road was carefully avoided, due to its being under observation from the farm. As he stepped to one side to circle a pile of sand-bags, he heard voices, and lo, there was the command group. They were engaged in earnest discussion, and did not see Bones.

"Hi!" cried a voice, and Joe beckoned wildly from the parapet of a well-boarded trench. Bones looked in astonishment at Joe, and then swearing a bit, jumped down.

"Right into 'em again," said he. "All right, I can try again."

"Oh, man, this is a great war," exclaimed Joe. "Look me over!" He displayed a great triangular rent in his overcoat and explained that it had been torn by the wire. "I had to shed my dungarees, too, they caught in the wire." Then he bent nearer.

"Listen to what's goin' on," he whispered in Bones' ear. "Things ain't movin' on greased wheels, I ain't kiddin' yuh."

The colonel had a map spread before him, and this map he consulted and profanely compared with the maps that the other officers had.

"Now that road there goes to Saint Maurice. There can't be two roads like that in the same sector. Very well, then, if that's the Saint Maurice road, where the —— is Saint Maurice? It's supposed to be right here in front of us, and there's nothing there but a —— field with more machine guns than a dog has fleas."

One of the officers, wrinkling his brows over his own map, suggested that the road before them might be the highroad to Fresnes.

"Absurd!" said the colonel, pulling up his mustache. Nevertheless he took another look at his map. "No," he decided, "that isn't the road. Never mind, we must get after this field in front here. The only way to find the second battalion is for us to find the objective. We've made a slight mistake by coming through the middle of this Bois de Marjolaine instead of going around the outside of it, but having cleaned out all the boche in it, it doesn't make any difference. We have now the enjoyable task of cleaning up the farm that one may see with the naked eye across yonder fertile field. A thought might now be given to our artillery. Where's my artilleryman?"

Alas, where was he? The other officers remembered that in the dugout the colonel had sent the artillery officer to the third battalion, feeling that that outfit would have more need of him. One of them mentioned this to the colonel.

"Ah," said he, "that's true. That's always the way. You never need a man till you've sent him somewhere else. Well, how about our airplane? Who's got a panel?"

An officer announced that the headquarters group had panels and rockets and all things necessary, and the colonel having given his directions, the officer went off to send the message to the plane. The group of runners, liaison men, signal-corps sergeants, etc. that accompanied regimental headquarters went by itself at some distance from the command group, as so large a body of men would be sure to draw fire. It is a difficult thing to send a message to a plane when the sender is in thick woods, and in this case the only clear space to spread a panel was in the road. The officer returned with the sad information that the only place to spread a panel was in the road. This, however, could not be, for the road was under fire, as shown by the tapping sound of the bullets and the dust leaping.

"Well, I'm open to suggestions," said the colonel. "Time presses. Here we have a battalion held up and a whole regiment sitting on its tail. It's possible that the second and third battalions can get around in back of that place and pinch it out. Meanwhile time passes. The brigade will be fussing around pretty soon, and after that the division will want to know where we are. I don't want to have a gilded aide dash up and hand me a ticket to Blois. I tell you these regiments that don't press

forward get it in the neck. Where's Major Everett's P. C. Now my thought is to skip up the road here and to tell Major Everett with my compliments to pass forward and take that farm, and that I will lend my presence to the attack. Artillery or no artillery, we must be gone. '*Toujours l'audace,*' as Lafayette, or Napoleon, or somebody said."

Above the trees a swishing sound, as of a boat passing rapidly through the water. Each looked at one another with startled gaze, and something passed rapidly before their eyes, landing at the colonel's feet. Joe, being a little above and apart from the rest, could find breath to shout.

"Lookoutferthebomb!" he roared.

Promptly every officer crashed against every other officer, and an interpreter and two non-commissioned officers were trodden under foot. The thing smoked merrily. The company leaped to the parapet of the trench with more agility than monkeys, even though monkeys have prehensile feet and tails, and these officers were encumbered with trench coats and boots. The bomb vomited smoke.

Bones, looking down, saw the thing steaming at the colonel's feet; the officer had not moved and was apparently frozen with horror. Some impulse other than his own mind moved Bones to leap into the ditch and then to the colonel's side. The colonel reached down, but Bones was before him and seizing the bomb, he hurled it into the woods and then cast himself against the side of the trench to protect himself from the explosion that must be imminent.

"Well, I'll be ——!" said the colonel, "and if this isn't the finest bunch of lunatics that it was ever my misfortune to meet outside the War College, then give my buzzards to the first buck private you meet! Might I make so bold as to inquire what the —— this all means? Don't tell me we're having experience with shell-shock so soon!"

A very white face belonging to one of the officers appeared over the parapet.

"The bomb," croaked the face, and fingers could be seen unhooking the blouse collar below it.

"The bomb!" echoed Bones. He arose and, stepping upon a box that had once held boche ammunition, he looked over the parapet. A thin column of smoke rose from a clump of bushes near at hand. Bones ducked.

"The bomb!" said the colonel. "Why, grease my saddle! Bomb, by the blue crusty ——! Oh curse this incoherence of mine! It's hereditary, my grandmother had it. Oh for words!"

The officer's face became purple, and finally his speech was uncorked with the violence of champagne.

"Bring me that bomb!" he roared. "Pick it up and give it to me."

The staff, however, were beyond hearing. None remained save Bones. The colonel grunted and sitting down lighted a cigar.

"Jump up there," he said quite calmly to Bones, "and bring me that thing. It isn't a bomb, it's a can the aviators throw out, with smoke coming out of it to show where it's landed. Jump up and get it."

Bones peeked cautiously over the parapet, and reasoning that if the thing was a bomb it would have burst by now, went to the bush where smoke still ascended and retrieving the can, brought it to the colonel, who took out a message therefrom and read it.

The staff having come to the same conclusion that Bones had arrived at, that if the bomb didn't explode it must be harmless, began to return. This staff by the way was larger than it had been when Bones had first seen it, for the colonel had picked up an officer here and an officer there, liaison officers from each battalion, a signal-corps officer or two, a doctor and a tank officer. They exclaimed among themselves and laughed at each other's retreat.

"I knew what it was before I'd gone ten jumps," said the gas officer, "but I didn't see it land and when any one yells 'bomb' and smoke rises, I likewise rise."

"Ah," said the doctor, "but you didn't see the bold brave man sweep the bomb out of the colonel's hand and throw it into the bushes." Here they all looked mirthfully at poor Bones, who was ready to die from mortification.

The colonel looked up and spat forth a piece of cigar.

"That'll be all," said he, in a voice like a man sharpening a saw. "The intention was good. *He* didn't know it wasn't a bomb. However, no hard feelings among those about to die. This airman with us has brains. He writes that he has signaled for artillery fire on the farm and when it starts, we do likewise. Lieutenant, advise Major Everett. The advance will be ordered after

five minutes of artillery preparation. That farm right in front of us, mind, Farme de la Marjolaine, same name as these woods. Follow me, the rest. Who's got a match? My cigar is out."

The view from the edge of the woods was different now. The day had dawned bright and fair, so to speak, and not over-cold. The shells still spouted in the field, but the farm was obscured by dirty yellowish smoke. It seemed to Bones but a minute before whistles began to blow, and amid considerable shouting, the battalion left the woods and proceeded at a smart trot across the field. The boche received them with a roar of delight and the battalion lost ten per cent. of its effectives the first two seconds. Bones looked about wildly for Joe, and discovering him, ran a few paces and seized his comrade by the sleeve.

"Gimme my gun!" cried Bones. "You got my gun! This is no place for a guy to be with no weapon!"

"Your gun ——!" cried Joe. "I ain't got your gun, I left it in the dugout. I give it to you last night. I says, 'Here's your gun, Bones, I'm puttin' it on the table' an' you just give a grunt. I thought you had it."

"Gimme my gun!" cried Bones, "this ain't no place to match pennies! Guys are gettin' killed all around us!"

"I ain't got your gun, yuh simple idiot!" cried Joe. "Snap out of it! What the —— would I want with your —— gun? I never shot one o' them things in my life. I'm scared sightless of 'em!"

Shell and machine-gun made gaps in the Yankee ranks, and as they drew near the German trench that ran along the back of the field, grenades began to fly at them. The airman, his engine booming overhead, ducked and swirled and used his machine-gun on every target he saw, but the smoke was quite thick and so he had little opportunity to aid. One company, its officers dead, half its strength gone in two minutes, most of its non-coms. casualties, broke and ran for the woods. The other companies, converging, became mingled each with the other, and finally the battalion, little better than a mob, entered the smoke and found itself under the great stone wall of the farm, choking with gas, panting for breath, and under a steady fire from the orchard beyond. The guns in the farm itself could not depress their muzzles sufficiently, and so the men under the wall did not receive any casualties from the farm. The colonel, his coat flying, waved his cigar and bellowed an order:

"Over the wall! Boost 'em over the wall!"

HALF a dozen men were boosted on the shoulders of their comrades, but the top of the wall was studded with broken bottles imbedded in the cement, and there was no crossing. There was wild yelling from around the corner and every one hastened that way to see what was going on. There was a small wooden door in the angle, and this was being assaulted with rifle butts. A door! Fifty men surged at it in one irresistible mass. It cracked and swayed, but still held. Those nearest the door could hear men running and shouting on the other side. Again the mob hurled themselves at the door, and this time it gave way in a mass of splinters. They surged into the yard, into a stream of bullets from guns that fired into their very faces, and then those that still survived surged out again.

Some took shelter behind trees, some clustered under the wall, and others piled into a narrow trench that wandered off into the fields. This trench was not as popular as it might have been, for the enemy knows where a trench is, and shells it for luck every so often, while a man who is in the open gets no attention paid to him as long as he remains unseen. The din was unbearable, machine-guns of both forces were going with all their might, shells were falling, grenades bursting, and rifles cracking like roasting corn. All command was lost. The men knew, however, that the farm must be taken or they were all dead men, for retreat across the open field was impossible, and an advance with the farm still held by the enemy was certain death. There was a brace of tanks grunting around in the orchard, like pigs after acorns, and the enemy machine-guns there ceased to be so troublesome. One of these tanks waddled off after a while upon some business of its own, and the other one had a shell landed on its turret, after which it aimlessly wandered in a circle and became quiescent. The colonel, alone in the shelter of the wall, lighted a cigar.

"Something is wrong," said he, "but I'll never know what it was. Well, I never

could bear the thought of dying of hardening of the arteries."

There was nothing to be done for the moment. The side of the farm that was toward the American lines was being pounded by machine-guns, a heavy rifle fire had been opened upon every window, and a machine-gun was firing into the hole in the wall where the little door had been. This gun of course had to fire at an angle but the gunners hoped to bounce their bullets from the stones and thus get some effect from their fire. Some Americans under the wall threw grenades into the court, and the boche on their part threw stick bombs.

When the rush to break down the door in the wall had started, Joe had intended to join in, but Bones' long skinny arm held him by the coat.

"Leggo my coat," protested Joe. "Ain't it tore enough now without you draggin' on it?"

"Calm yourself," said Bones. "Where you goin'? You ain't no doughboy. Let them do the fightin'. I ain't got no gun an' neither have you. We didn't come up here to fight."

"Come on," cried Joe. "The boche that's shootin' at us don't know we ain't fighters."

"Sit down," said Bones, still retaining hold on Joe's coat. "I'm sore at this Army anyway. Every time I try to help out they blow me the razz. Let's you an' me do some souvenirin' an' duck. This colonel's goin' to try us for bein' absent."

"Yuh can't souvenir here with every guy in both armies shootin' at yuh."

"Well, you'll get shot at anyway," Bones pointed out. This was true, and Joe saw the justice of it at once.

"Well, what'll we hunt for?" he asked. "I don't see no Jerries lyin' around here."

"We'll find one," said Bones. "Let's get outta this smoke a ways."

The two men began to crawl in the opposite direction to that taken by the colonel. They heard the battering at the door and the men yelling as the attempt was made to enter the farm. They rounded a corner of the wall and, flattening to let a shell pass by, they perceived a stretch of field, and men running.

"There's our barrage," said Bones, pointing to a wall of smoke about six hundred yards away, "an' that's where we ought to be. There's our airman. I'll bet he don't dare to call for no more artillery for fear it'll flatten us. I tell yuh that colonel is a good guy, but he didn't wait long enough for this here farm to get bombarded."

"That's right," agreed Joe. "There's a lot o' krauts in there yet. Hark to that!"

The farm hummed like a hive. There was a trench that followed the wall here, coming in from the field. Bones looked into it, but could see nothing. The trench smelled of gas, and was probably full of it, gas having a tendency to settle to the lowest possible level.

WhoooOOOP-SLAM! The two men went into the trench, gas or no gas, at the first sound of the approaching shell. They were so deafened and stunned by the explosion that they could not speak for some time. They crouched in the bottom of the trench, covered with swirling smoke, and gingerly moved their limbs to see if they had suddenly lost any. Bones finally stood up and clambered out of the trench.

"Hey, Joe," he called excitedly, "come outta that. Lookit!"

Joe came out.

"Do you suppose we're gassed?" he asked.

"Gassed ——," said Bones, "lookit what that shell did."

A wild shell, nationality unknown, had landed on the roof of the farm and gone on down, to come out again in bits. It had removed a good deal of the roof in so doing, and a great chunk of wall had crumbled.

"See that wall," cried Joe, "I bet a guy could get in there."

"I'll bet he could," said Bones.

The farm seemed to be silent now, for as hard as the two listened they could hear no sound save the racket in the orchard. "They're all dead," said Joe excitedly. "Let's git in an' souvenir 'em before the other guys get at 'em."

"I'll go you," cried Bones. "Give us a boost."

"Now you reach down your hand and help me up," admonished Joe, bending over, and holding his hand for Bones' foot. Bones stepped on Joe's hands, then on his shoulder, and got his elbows on the edge of the bite the shell had taken out of the wall. A bullet smacked into the wall at Joe's ear, so that he leaped involuntarily and left Bones with his feet hanging, but the other scrambling and scratching, got a purchase and pulled himself up into the hole. Another bullet clicked and Joe took to the trench

again, where he put on his gas-mask. There he waited, and after cautiously reconnoitering, finally emerged again. He went back to the hole in the wall, but no Bones.

"The ——!" muttered Joe, "he's double-crossed me."

At once he turned and ran back to the corner by the orchard, where he collided with a sergeant.

"Hey!" cried Joe, removing his mask, "a shell knocked down a piece of wall an' all the krauts are dead an' a guy's in there gittin' all the souvenirs."

Both ducked for a shell that was close enough to cover them with dirt, and then the sergeant dragged Joe to the colonel, where Joe repeated what he had said.

"Good!" cried the colonel. "We'll show 'em yet!" He waved his arm and about fifteen wild-eyed men gathered. "Lead on," said he to Joe. When they arrived at the hole in the wall, the colonel took one look and then turned to the sergeant.

"Shove 'em in there," he cried, "shove 'em in and I'll start another push at the door. When I whistle, let's go."

The men began to shove each other up the wall and as soon as those up first had gained a foothold, they turned and assisted their comrades up. The unseen sniper who had fired at Joe got three of them in the process, but they all got up save Joe.

"The dirty ——," cried Joe, "that's all the thanks I get. They won't leave me so much as a button off one o' them gray caps."

The shell had come in through the roof and the explosion had ruined the floor, so that one could see right down into the farm. This part of the building had been a hay-loft, and the lower floor was covered with broken tile, plaster, pieces of lath and heaps of clothes that might be men. On the far side of the abyss sat Bones, dangling his feet from a beam and pointing to the men the way to go, which was along under the roof and then across on more beams. This part of the farm seemed destitute of defenders. Probably they were all dead. There were numerous bodies lying in the shadow.

Through holes in the roof the men looked into the yard of the farm. They were considerably hampered, because it was impossible to stand upright and look at the same time, but the sergeant could see enough to locate two machine-guns, and see that the house part of the farm was across the yard, its windows stuffed with mattresses. He inched along the beam until he came to Bones, and there, his eye glancing downward, he saw the form of a German soldier, with outstretched arms, a shattered rifle under him. The sergeant looked questioningly at Bones, but the latter shook his head.

"I guess he fell off the beam!" whispered Bones. The sergeant snorted.

Then he put his hand into a pouch and passed Bones a grenade.

"See that gun?" he asked, pointing to one in the wagon shed. "Letter go at that one when you hear the whistle."

"How do you work it?" asked Bones.

The sergeant illustrated in pantomime, pulled the ring, swung the grenade back and forth, and whispered, "Spit spat spy, hit him in the eye," then made as if to throw the grenade. "When the Old Boy whistles," whispered the sergeant, and went back to advise his riflemen.

The infantrymen who had come in through the hole in the wall were lined up on the beam that ran along the front of the barn. The sergeant decided that when the whistle blew and Bones had thrown the grenade, his men might knock holes through the roof by breaking the tile with their rifles, and then fire into the yard. The tiles were laid on a framework of slats, and the part of the roof that overlooked the yard was still intact, thus concealing the Americans from view. Just beyond Bones the carriage shed joined the barn at an angle, and in the carriage shed, behind an overturned cart, was the gun he was to silence.

Without warning there was a long tearing crash, the sound of rending wood and a rapid-fire clatter of tiles into the yard. Bones looked over his shoulder with horror. A great piece of roof, weakened perhaps by the explosion, had fallen away like an opening door and hurled a shower of tiles into the yard. Behold some dozen or so infantrymen, clinging to a beam, some standing, some kneeling, some on hands and knees, and all with the startled expression of actors on a stage where the curtain has risen and disclosed them to the view of the audience before they are ready to begin the play. Bones could see them outlined against the sky like so many pigeons. There was one second of breathless silence, a lone

tile smacked into the yard, and then the guns in the house and the carriage shed opened with a roar. The farm was rectangular: the barn on the south side, the living quarters to the north, opposite where Bones and his friends were, and the carriage shed to the east or right of the infantry.

The orchard and the main body of Americans outside were on the west, where there was a blank wall, with the small door in the corner. Bones heard wild yelling from the west side of the yard and the cracking of rifles behind him, but no sound of a whistle. Nevertheless it was time to throw the grenade. But how? The hole in the roof was all right to look through, but not to throw a grenade through. Bones began to crawl along the beam as rapidly as he could, the grenade clutched tightly in his hand. There was a dormer window in the loft over the carriage house and it was his intention to lean out this window and hurl the grenade upon the gun beneath. He came to the junction of the carriage house and barn and crawled around the angle.

The loft of the carriage house was lower than that of the barn. Moreover, it had a floor on it. This floor was alive with men, who apparently fired rifles out of the loft window. Bones looked at them for some time. It was rather dark, but he could make out that they wore German helmets, and that some of them had boots and others long trousers, so they must be Germans.

"I ain't goin' to throw this in on no Yanks," said Bones to himself, "an' then have 'em laugh at me afterwards. These guys are boche all right an' they ain't prisoners either."

Suddenly one of the Germans must have seen Bones, for he gave a tremendous howl and Bones could see the whites of their faces as they looked at him. Then he threw the grenade.

The colonel, running about the orchard and exposing himself recklessly, had succeeded in getting some kind of a force together to make the rush on the gate. He had not above forty men, though, and that was hardly enough. There were some guns in the farther woods that were still troublesome, also, and casualties were steady. The colonel was in the midst of explaining to a captain, two lieutenants and a sergeant what he was trying to do, when the crash of the tiles falling into the yard made them suspect that something had happened. The immediate hammering of the machine-guns assured them that something had.

"Come on," cried the colonel, "everybody up!"

Then, blowing upon his whistle, he led the dash for the door. The men were met with a fire that was like a blast from a furnace door, and the remnants of them were borne back like leaves before it. The colonel's heart sickened at the sight and he gave the cause up for lost. Nevertheless he rallied his men once more, dragging a squad out of a trench here, a man from behind a tree there, taking a machine-gun crew from their gun and arming them with dead men's rifles. All this in the space of a minute or two. There was a tremendous explosion and the roof of the building opposite the little gate seemed to lift and subside into place again. A cloud of white smoke poured from the window.

"Now!" roared the colonel, and putting himself at the head of his men, he led the way at a run toward the door.

Bones, having thrown the grenade into the thick of the men in the loft, retired discreetly around the corner to await its explosion. He remembered he had not said, "Spit spat spy," or its equivalent. The grenade did not function and Bones began to fear it was a dud. Maybe he hadn't released the safety catch, if grenades had such a thing. He remembered the sergeant had pulled the ring. There was a great deal of yelling and scrambling around the corner, where the Germans were trying to find the grenade.

"They can't shoot and hunt for the grenade, too," thought Bones. "That's some good I've done. Maybe—"

BANG! The colonel in the orchard heard the grenade burst and cried on his men. Bones heard the men cheer and knew the attack on the door had been renewed. He peeked cautiously around the corner. The loft was full of smoke, save a little way above the floor, where the draft of air cleared it away. There were many bundles lying scattered—

"The gun!" thought Bones. "He give me that grenade to wreck that gun with an' I never done it."

He swung himself around the corner, got on to the floor of the loft, and crawled as rapidly along as he could over bodies, rifles, ammunition, and many things that he could not identify, save that they hurt his knees.

Abruptly his hands shot out into space and Bones fell headlong.

The colonel leaped through the door, fired his automatic at a German who was running across the yard, tore into the kitchen of the farm and killed two more, and then out again into the yard. There was firing from the upper windows of the house, but this was rapidly being silenced. On the beam of the barn seven Americans sat astride, looking for targets. Three more appeared at a door below. From the cellar of the farm came the explosion of a grenade, and from another subterranean entrance emerged four German prisoners. A captain had these in charge, and he had a drawn pistol, not for the Germans, but for the Americans. Those doughboys wanted no prisoners. They had been in the orchard too long. There was a sudden silence.

"I guess this farm is ours," said the colonel, and proceeded to light a fresh cigar. His eye happened to fall on a man in an American uniform who wore no arms. This man came very diffidently out from under the shed, and seemed to be trying to efface himself. The colonel, thinking of spies and various things, went directly to this man and demanded him to halt. Then he recognized Bones.

"You'd better get yourself a rifle," said the colonel. "This is too wild a country for a man to be loose in without weapons." Evidently he no longer had suspicion of Bones.

At this moment the captain drew near with his three prisoners. They conversed eagerly among themselves and pointed to Bones.

"What's all this?" the colonel asked the captain. "They know this man, do they?"

"They remarked something about his having killed the gunner back there," said the captain. "I'm not very adept at German."

"Killed the gunner!" cried the colonel. "Why he hasn't got any weapons. What gunner?"

"There was a gun under the shed," said the captain, "that kept us away from the door." He turned to the Germans again. "Ummm," he began, "let me see. *Wie hat er euer kamerad geschlagt?* or something like that."

"Ja, ja," cried the Germans, and illustrated with their hands a man falling, and then two of them knocked their heads together.

"How the —— was it?" cried the colonel. "Speak up!"

"I was crawlin' along the loft," said Bones, "and I fell off the end of it an' cracked skulls with the Jerry gunner. He didn't have no helmet on, an' my tin hat crowned him right on the skull. My head buzzes yet."

"Well, why didn't you say so before? Why didn't you speak right up and say you killed him?"

"Well, sir," said Bones, his face a deep red, "I just fell out the loft, and when I got up, there was no one there but the guy I fell on, an' I was afraid he might have been dead before I hit him. An' anyways it ain't very heroic to butt a guy to death."

"I'll be ——," said the colonel. "Done to death by a tin hat and a hard skull. How's your own head feel?"

"All right, sir," said Bones, "these helmets is well padded."

The colonel puffed his cigar and went about his business. Bones sat down upon the remnants of a chair and lighted a cigaret. He saw them carry away the man he had fallen on, who was not dead, but able to sit up and hold his head in his hands, while he decided what had happened.

The men who had taken the farm were ransacking it in search of loot and prisoners. The great gate had been swung wide, and the colonel and all surviving officers were out rounding up the men from the orchard. There were many who had hidden in trenches, and in the fields, and these, seeing the farm taken, began to come in. Work of reorganization was begun immediately, for the attack must continue, but first the troops disorganized by the capture of the farm, must be separated into units, the surviving officers and non-commissioned officers portioned out, and the advance renewed. The enemy shelling had ceased in this locality. This might be due to a transferrence of fire to another part of the sector or to the pressure of the American advance necessitating a withdrawal of the guns.

Bones threw back his head to allow a lungful of cigaret smoke to issue forth. Overhead he noticed that the sky was clear and blue, with no trace of cloud. He also noticed what seemed to be two flies turning and twisting and buzzing about each other. These seeming flies were connected with

each other by crinkly threads, that dissolved and were renewed and dissolved again. Bones said never a word, but continued to watch. A platoon had been reformed and left the orchard to clear out the woods on the far side of the field. Some machine-gunners and a detachment of the pick-and-shovel brigade began to prepare the farm for defense against a counter-attack. Signal-corps men burdened with wire arrived and went about the establishment of a central office.

Bones still watched the twisting flies. One suddenly sailed earthward, rushing straight down in headlong flight. The other followed, the white threads still tying the two together. They sailed downward at terrific speed, and then the uppermost one turned sharply and rose again, while the other disappeared from sight behind some woods. Bones looked around. No one had seen but himself; they were all too busy. These two flies were two airplanes, and one had shot the other down.

The white threads that tied the two together were the trails of tracer bullets. The uppermost plane started to mount again and Bones could see the red, white and blue, of its rudder. Good. The one that had been shot down was a German, then. Bones ran into the shed and mounted the ladder to the loft. Here, looking out the window, he could see a thin column of very black smoke rising from the woods.

"He's burned up," said Bones. "No souvenirs off that bird."

He looked for the other plane and just as he found it, a cloud of six black dots seemed to descend upon the lone plane and shortly after a second pillar of smoke showed another plane shot down in flames. Bones looked into the yard with horror, but all were busy about their affairs.

A dressing station was being established and was already doing a rushing business. A section of a battlefield may be apparently as calm as a summer day, but let a dressing station be set up even for a minute, and it will find customers. Bloody men seem to spring from the ground; some will walk in and some be carried by their comrades, and there will be many demands for stretchers to bring in a guy that's just got hit over by that clump of trees.

With a booming roar a plane smoked by over the farm. This was the contact plane that had been with the battalion all morning, and was easy for Bones to recognize since it had one wing lighter in color than the other. The pilot was off to avenge his comrade and tackle six boche single-handed. They went off out of sight over the roof of the house, and Bones cursed heartily. Suddenly he saw the well-known smoke, and as his heart sank, another smoke flowed down the sky, like oil down the side of a white wall.

"Oh man," cried Bones, "he's shot down two of 'em!" He looked around guiltily to see if he had been heard, but there was no one at hand. Another pillar of smoke, and Bones could scarce repress a cheer. Just then he saw, over the corner of the roof, four planes flying back to Germany. The Yank had done for two, but they had also done for him.

"Ain't it ——!" muttered Bones. A voice hailed him from the courtyard.

"Come down here, Bones. I got somethin' to say to yuh."

There was Joe, beckoning wildly. Bones rubbed the fire from the end of his cigaret, put the butt behind his ear for future use, and descended.

Joe welcomed him with enthusiasm.

"Oh, man," he cried, "ain't yuh glad yuh come? Looka me!" Joe displayed himself as does a lady exhibiting a new dress. He was girt with German pistols, that hung from him in a fringe. He had two pairs of field-glasses around his neck, and on his back a German knapsack with hair on it.

"There's lots more up in the loft," said Bones. "Have you been through them?"

"Yeh, I was up there," said Joe. "That's where I got the field-glasses. I only got one pistol, though, because I had to go halves with a doughboy that was with me."

"How about goin' halves with me?" demanded Bones. "You're the guy that lost my gun for me in the first place, and now you go an' clean up on a bunch o' Jerries I killed."

"You killed?"

"Yes, I killed. I slung a grenade in there. If it hadn't been for me you an' the rest of these button-chasers would be out in the cold yet."

"Now I'll tell one," said Joe.

"Huh!" cried Bones, "just because I been crowded down an' never had no chance to show myself ain't no sign I ain't a soldier when the time comes. I never get no credit for nuthin'."

"You lead a hard life," said Joe. "Now just to show you my heart's in the right place, I'll give you one o' these." He detached a pistol and handed it to Bones, who took it gingerly.

While he was still examining it, the colonel appeared with two officers.

"Come, come, you men, we're ready to go!" he cried. "Where's our plane? I want to let him know where we are." They went out the door, not looking at the long row of feet that appeared from under blankets beside the gate, and began to look for the plane. They saw it soon enough, and the officers began to wave handkerchiefs at it. The plane obligingly swooped nearer the earth.

Pup-pup-pup-pup!

"Hey!" bellowed the colonel, "you —— fool, don't shoot at *us!* Can't you see we're Americans?"

Evidently the man in the plane could not, for he tore off another burst that fortunately did not hit any one.

"That's a boche plane," cried two or three at once. "See? See? Look at the cross!"

THIS was confirmed by the blowing of whistles in the farm—three short blasts signaling the approach of hostile airplanes. When this signal is blown every one is supposed to get under cover. The signal usually had the effect of bringing every one out to see the plane. So it worked out in this case, for when the colonel and his staff arrived in the farmyard at a gallop, every one was out looking at the sky. The colonel delivered himself of some good old Army language, drawn from a vocabulary that had been gained in service during and since the war with Spain. The German plane wheeling and hovering, marked well that the farm had been taken. It also marked well the line of the battalion advance.

"Under cover!" shouted the colonel, and every one went. From the shelter of the cow-barn the staff observed the German plane.

"Where's our man?" complained the colonel. "Why isn't he up there chasing that fellow away?"

No one answered.

"Probably our man saw the German first," remarked some one.

Bones, resenting this slur upon a brave man, thereupon spoke.

"He got shot down," said he. "About six of 'em jumped on him and shot him down. They had a great fight. He scuppered two of 'em, but they got him at last."

"When was all this?" cried the colonel.

"Oh, while the gang was huntin' souvenirs around the farm," answered Bones. "I was watchin' from the loft."

"Well, in the name of all that's inflammable, why didn't you raise some kind of an alarm? You mean you just sat there like a bump on a log and let these boche shoot down our contact plane? Why, what are all these machine-guns for? We might at least have scared the Germans away from him. Ah, well, you just fell out of the loft on your head, and I suppose you're not quite yourself, but I'll remark that I can't follow your mental process. Oh ——!" moaned the colonel, "what's the use of talking to him!"

"Well, sir," said Bones, "I made one or two false moves this mornin' an' I'm goin' to go slow for a while now."

"Well, we must be goin'," said the colonel. "One German plane can't hold up our advance. Come, let's make a dash for it. Good there's some one got some sense!"

Some machine-gunners had run out and set up their guns in the orchard. From here they opened a lively fire upon the plane which had the effect of keeping it in the air at a good altitude. The staff then followed the colonel out of the farm and across the field. The two privates of artillery accompanied them.

"I'm gonna get rid of some loose weight," said Joe, and reaching into his pocket he drew out the M. P. badge that Bones had stolen and threw it away. From the other pocket he drew a can-shaped object that Bones recognized easily as the one that had contained the message from the plane that Bones had thought was a bomb.

"Where'd yuh get that?" asked Bones.

"Oh, I picked it up," said Joe. "It would have been interestin' enough to show the folks, but I can't carry that an' all these guns, too." He cast the can away likewise.

The advance proceeded with little difficulty. There was nothing in this part of the sector but fields and woods, with here and there a blind trench that yielded nothing. Once in a while a lone machine-gun held them up for a time and an occasional shell came their way, but that was all. On the left and right there was every evidence

of lively fighting, groups of airplanes flew by, clouds of smoke arose. The reason for this was that in front of this particular battalion was nothing but open country, up to the bank of a river. On the right was a main highway and a town, and another town on the left. There was a railway station and yard at the right-hand town that the enemy did not want to lose, hence his resistance was desperate.

All his forces had been shifted there and all his available artillery was concentrated on the forces before the town. The progress of the battalion in the fields was observed, but as its advance would do little harm, it was unmolested.

This territory also would do no good to the Americans, for if the town fell these fields would be of no value to the enemy, whereas as long as the town was held by the Germans, a force in the fields would be in danger of being cut off. The American divisional command knew this as well as any one, but the contact plane had been shot down, and efforts at liaison by means of runners had met with no success. The back areas, where the regiment had jumped off that morning, and the roads and trenches leading down into the plain from the height, were the recipients of considerable shell fire, and it was hard for a man to get through. Once a messenger from the rear did get through the zone of fire, he would have some difficulty in locating the unit for which he was searching.

The colonel, therefore, did not receive any intimation that he was sadly wanted on the right of the sector. He was lost. He began to admit to himself that he was completely at sea. There was no landmark by which he could discover his position, and the fact that there was little resistance opposed to his advance led him to believe that he was not taking any positions that were valuable at all to the enemy. Suddenly there was a lively burst of firing directly in front, some bomb-throwing and considerable yelling. All hastened forward, and entered a grove of trees.

"Here we are," said Joe, cheerfully, "more souvenirs. Ain't this a keen place!"

There was a group of huts under these trees, most of them very well made, with real doors and glass in the windows. At one side, covered by a netting, was a great howitzer, a tremendous thing like an elephant, one of those Austrian tractor affairs. Some effort had been made at taking this gun away, for the barrel had been dismounted and was already in place on its own wagon.

These guns were dismounted for transportation, the gun carriage going by itself and the barrel having a carriage of its own. The huts, that had probably been used by the gun crew, showed evidence of hasty retreat. Blankets were scattered about, German newspapers, a rack full of rifles had been thrown down and left, overcoats and carts of uniforms littered the ground. Moppers-up examined the huts and pronounced them empty. The firing had been done by the Americans at the first sight of the huts, and a few grenades had been thrown to be on the safe side. Joe and Bones, exulting, were about to explore the huts, when the colonel began to blow his whistle. At the same time officers could be seen running out into the fields, and going off toward units on the right and left.

"I know what this place is," explained the colonel. "I'm too far to the left. I've seen this on the map. They had it marked as a dummy gun position. That gun's no dummy, but no matter. No wonder we couldn't find the town. We'd have hit the river in another twenty minutes."

Here he sent another officer scampering to see if he could find any trace of the third battalion and if so, to lead them at once by the right flank.

"Come," continued the colonel, "the town's on our right. That's where we belong. We can find the battle now. Let's hurry. They'll think we're skulking, sure."

It was some time before the forward units could be swung around, but they finally completed the movement, and the colonel received reports that the third battalion was found and would follow. The second battalion he expected to meet on the way. Even after the casualties suffered during the capture of the farm, there were about five hundred men left in the battalion, and such a mass of men, scattered as they are to minimize the effect of hostile fire, is very difficult to control.

Resistance to the advance had ceased almost entirely, but after the movement to the right began, the enemy artillery got to work again and the shelling became heavier. The colonel and his staff, with the two privates of artillery included, and some half dozen medical corps men, runners, etc.,

moved some distance back of the first wave and hence missed a good deal of the sporadic machine-gun fire that crackled from time to time. Suddenly the advance stopped. A soldier came panting back from one of the forward platoons and reported that the roofs of a village could be seen through the trees.

"Good!" said the colonel. "I know the name of that place. Well, we've gotten our bearings again. Here you," beckoning to Joe, "do a little work to earn your pay. You remember Captain Lawford that was with me in the dugout? He's out on the left flank with a battalion. Tell him to envelop the northern edge of the village as per plan."

Joe went off, neither with any excess of joy or speed, and without the slightest idea of where he was going. The colonel sent another runner to the right battalion and an officer to the machine-guns to come up and prepare to support, and then looked overhead for his plane. There was a plane there, but it did not respond to his signals.

"Put your glasses on that boy," said the colonel, "and see if it's our German friend. I prophesy no good from him if it is."

An officer, thus urged, looked long and earnestly and finally remarked that the plane that hovered like a buzzard overhead was a German and no mistake. It was very high in the air, but the cross on its wings could be seen with a glass. The German planes carried a cross with very thin arms and not the Maltese cross of fiction. The idea in this was to make it harder for troops on the ground to distinguish the nationality of a plane, as the thin cross was difficult to see. The Allied planes had a circle of red, white and blue upon their wings, and the result was that a man taking a hasty look with a field-glass, and seeing nothing on the wings of an approaching plane, would immediately give the signal to fire upon said plane. Not infrequently it was an allied plane that was shot at.

Fire was opened upon the German plane, but he disdained to fly. The colonel raged, for he must have artillery support.

"Here, where's that other guide?" he inquired. "I want to send him over to the third battalion, wherever it is, after that artillery officer. I'm ready to eat crow. I need that man."

Every one looked at every one else and then looked wildly about, as if to find Bones hiding in the grass or covering himself with the skirts of some one's overcoat. It took but a minute to discover that Bones was gone, and there was no finding him. The colonel thereupon sent some one else for the artillery officer and started two men out with the name of the village written on their gas-mask tickets, with orders to find some artillery and request fire upon said town. The advance then began again.

Bones thrust his head from a shell-hole and looked at the backs of the staff.

"There goes a lot of trouble," said he. "I can't let poor Joe go wandering off by himself. Where d'yuh suppose he went to?"

Bones had stopped at the first opportunity and, pretending to bind up a loose puttee, had slid into a shell-hole. The staff, having its eyes straight ahead and having something else on its mind than the whereabouts of a buck private of unknown origin, had not noticed his absence until the colonel called for him.

"I'll go over to them houses," said Bones, "that's where he went. Over to the other battalion."

Bones went in that direction. There were many men wandering apparently aimlessly about, stretcher-bearers, first-aid men, platoon and company runners, telephone men, and an occasional private with a handful of prisoners, so Bones attracted no attention. He found a cart path through the woods and followed this along with two machine-gun crews who, barrel and tripod on shoulder and ammunition in hand, cursed themselves and every one else heartily, particularly a captain who had left their carts some five miles in rear.

The path came out in the center of the village and the machine-gunners, being too tired to reconnoiter, walked right in, muttering that if there were any boche there they would have fired upon them, the Americans, long ago. The village was hardly big enough for the name. There was a cross-roads in the center and about the cross-roads were several small stone buildings, their signs still faintly decipherable—"*Boulangerie Debit des Vins.*" A dingy house had over the door the words, "*Au Repos des Bicyclistes,*" and in much newer, blacker letters, "*Feld Fliegerabteilung Kommandantur.*" There was the shell of a house, its roof gone and its walls blackened by fire, and a little way down the street a brown building, also with a sign on its side

wall, "*A la Boite de Chevalier Ecurie Remise, Salle des Noces.*" The machine-gunners looked into all these buildings, peeking in through the glassless windows, or stooping to look into the cellar, and reported them vacant. Bones continued down the street to the brown building.

The attack begun by the Americans that morning was not a drive, but a local demonstration, participated in by one division alone. Its purpose was to confuse the mind of the German command as to exactly where the main blow would fall. Farther to the west a real drive had been started that was proceeding with every appearance of great success. Where the attack had been simply a demonstration, the enemy had got wind of the affair, and thinking the main drive was upon a railroad junction, had withdrawn troops from the left and reinforced the threatened part of the line. When the attack had begun, therefore, every effort was made to keep the Americans from the railroad, and in this the Germans were successful, because the division commander believed that his mission was simply to make a feint and not to push home an attack, with a consequent unnecessary loss.

The regiment that Bones and Joe were with met with little resistance, therefore, except at the capture of the farm. There was nothing in back of this farm but fields, until the river was reached, where there was a strong line of resistance. The German command, however, sent an airplane over to observe the progress of the Americans and to report when their advance endangered the flank of the force that was fighting farther to the east, where the struggle for the railroad junction was in progress.

NOW then, the real drive was to the west. This went very well, the enemy was confused, demoralized, and American progress was very rapid. The American high command, therefore, decided that the purpose of the demonstration in the east had been achieved, and ordered the engagement broken off. The force that was threatening the railroad had better liaison with the rear than the regiment that Bones was with, and they were only too glad to withdraw when the word came to do so. There was an entire brigade there, and it and the regiment on its left fell back, in accordance with orders, to specified positions. The regiment on the extreme left, however, was hard to reach. Their colonel was with the forward units, their contact plane had been lost, two more planes that had been sent out had failed to return, and liaison was completely severed. For this reason the regiment did not receive orders to knock off work when the others did. It was to this regiment that Bones and Joe had attached themselves and that had been observed so long by the German plane. That plane kept in touch with its own lines by some mysterious means, and so the enemy, having beaten off one attack and relieved the pressure on his left, could now turn his attention to this isolated force on the right. The enemy knew just where it was, for the plane had done its duty nobly.

Bones was about two yards from the door of the brown building and was reading a nice white sign over the door, "*Soldatenheim*," when he heard the rushing sound of a tempest in a forest of pines. He covered the two yards to the door and was inside in one leap. The tempest arrived, in the shape of what was technically known as a flock of shells. They fell like flakes of snow. The battalion on the edge of the town was almost entirely destroyed, the one in the woods that the colonel was with was attacked by machine-gun fire but retreated in fairly good order, and the third, discovering that it was under fire from both flanks, fell back in its turn to the clump of woods where the howitzer was, where it dug in and maintained its position.

Bones crawled along a brick passage, found that it led to an interior court, and then turned aside into the kitchen. Here he ventured to rise to his knees. He had expected to find a cellar door somewhere in this vicinity, but there was none visible. The first thing that met his eye was a pile of Luger pistols on a table. Bones grunted. At that moment the door from the court opened with a crash, and some one leaped in.

"Hi, Joe," called Bones, "come in here."

There was a muttered exclamation, and Joe appeared at the kitchen door.

"Well, where the —— did you come from?" he asked.

"I come in the front door when all this tinware started to slam down," said Bones.

"How the —— did you know I was here?" demanded Joe.

"Oh, I seen them guns on the table an' I

knew you was around despoilin' the slain. I think you're a gool. Ain't you got no heart?"

"Oh!" said Joe, "yeh, them guns, I left 'em there."

BLAM! The house seemed to leap. Dust smoked from every crack, the fireplace discharged a cloud of soot, pieces of plaster fell from the ceiling, a perfect torrent of tile clattered into the yard and in the upper stories of the house a series of crashes and thumps ensued that lasted several minutes.

"They bounced one off the roof!" gasped Bones. He got to his feet and stared at Joe. Outside the shells rumbled heavily.

"About them guns," said Joe. "I couldn't carry 'em no further. They're a drug on the market, anyway."

"—— the guns an' you, too," yelled Bones. "Do you know where the cellar to this place is?"

"No, I don't. Listen, now, I'm just tellin' yuh—" the word was lost in the most appalling crash that these men had ever heard in all their noisy experience at the front.

Sight was simply lost in a cloud of smoke and dust, and speech was impossible for some time. Finally, with ringing head and streaming eyes, Bones fumbled at his gas-mask, and shoving the table from his body, got up. He found he was uninjured, though breathless from the force of the explosion. The floor was inches deep in plaster and pulverized brick, the windows at the far end of the kitchen, barricaded as they had been with boards and blankets to prevent light showing, had been blown in and were hanging in slivers to their frames, and through the gap in the kitchen wall could be seen a heavy cloud of smoke and dust that had not yet settled. A shell had struck in the courtyard, and though the wall had been blown in by the force of the explosion, none of the fragments had penetrated. Bones limped toward the door, rubbing a place on his leg that had felt the impact of the table. Joe's left eye peered cautiously around the edge of the door into the hall.

"I'm alive," said Bones bitterly, "I suppose you was lookin' to see if there was any chance to souvenir me."

"You ain't got nothin' I want," answered Joe, "'cept maybe a overcoat and your'n wouldn't fit me anyhow."

The hole in Joe's coat that had been torn by the wire grew ever larger, and in a little while he would not have an overcoat, but something resembling a sailor's pea-jacket.

"You an' me for the cellar," remarked Bones. "Let's see if maybe the front of the house don't open into it. This here was a hotel, and the front room would be where they put out their likker, so it ought to have a place to go down cellar from."

The two hurried to the front of the house. Here indeed was the bar, not after the American fashion, but simply a small counter in one corner, and a great many tables ranged along the walls. This room was dirty with fallen plaster, but otherwise empty. The occupants of *Soldatenheim* must have been warned of an impending attack and taken all their drinkables with them. There were still some pictures of the Imperial family on the wall and a very fine and interesting collection of photographs. A hasty glance showed that these were of innumerable stiff-backed, puff-chested, mustached gentlemen of German origin, dressed in uniforms and grouped about either a trench mortar, a one-pounder gun, a machine-gun, or a piece of artillery. Bones could not help noticing that in certain of these groups the members kneeled, reclined, or stood about smoking, all in those attitudes of unstudied ease so common in photographs of the Civil War period. These pictures went back to Germany labeled, "Life at the Front," and were no less authentic than those that went back to the United States with the same labels. The windows of this room were likewise covered with boards, over which gray blankets had been tacked. Bones listened to the shelling. It seemed to have passed down the street. He stepped to the window to make sure.

Windows in France open in two halves, the halves reaching from the top of the casing to the bottom. The halves are secured by means of a rod that runs lengthwise and engages in a slot at top and bottom. The rod in this particular window had been broken and the window was secured by a piece of wire, which, however, allowed it to swing open in the middle the very slightest bit. To this tiny crack Bones put his eye. A shock seemed to pass through his body. He turned to look for Joe, who was doing something at the counter.

"Joe!" gasped Bones, in a tragic whisper.

"If you'll only shut up a minute," said Joe in his natural voice, "I'll explain why

I threw them guns away. I found somethin' better than guns. Everybody's got one o' them Lugers. But these here now" —he looked with pride on a row of beer mugs he had spread in front of him, some of stone, some of wood, and some of lead— "these here now, I calls real good stuff."

He looked for Bones' approval, but that young man had his eye to the crack of the window, and something in his attitude induced Joe to cross the floor and apply his own eye to the crack, a little below his comrade's.

"Gee," remarked Joe, "lookit the boche."

Down the street came a party of men with less excitement and haste than that displayed by a party of workmen about to dig a ditch. These men were garbed in gray, they wore helmets that came down around their necks, and looked like inverted coal-scuttles. Upon their backs they carried the implements of their trade, that is to say, machine-guns. Opposite the hotel there was a harsh command. Some of the men knelt and the mounts which were slung on their backs like knapsacks, by an ingenious fashioning of the support through which the men could put their arms, were removed, the gun was placed on the mount and locked, ammunition-passers jumped forward with the ammunition boxes, a belt was inserted, and the soldier in command, probably a non-com, giving the word, the guns pounded cheerfully. They fired a belt, and then two more gun crews appeared, passed through the first two, set up their guns and began to fire, while the first two dismounted theirs and proceeded. There was a deadly calm, a terrible coolness about the whole affair that was most demoralizing to behold.

"Where's our guys?" whispered Joe.

"Uh!" responded Bones, "that's the question."

The two men looked solemnly at each other then, as if by common consent, they applied their eyes to the crack in the window again. There was a loud clank as their helmets collided and a scraping sound as they got to their feet and looked each other in the eye once more. They had seen in that one brief glance down the street, a party of men approaching and this party needed no second look to identify them as moppers up. A mopper up goes jauntily along issuing hand-grenades as a sower scatters seed. He tosses one into a window, another into a cellar. Occasionally, by way of change, he fires a pistol into a doorway. The first dull explosions of the grenades came to the ears of the two Americans, even as they got to their feet.

"Let's go up-stairs," said Bones, "I never heard of a guy chuckin' a grenade into an up-stairs window."

"We can't go up the stairs—they'll see us from the door," objected Joe. This was true, but there must be a back stairway. The two ran back into the kitchen and heard grenades explode in the stable yard on the other side of the wall. Panic took possession of them. They were but two boys after all, and unaccustomed to war, and to find oneself surrounded by the enemy and in imminent danger of being blown to bits by a grenade is an unsettling thing to any mind.

BLUNG! went a grenade in the cellar. *Bang!* went another in the front hall. Bones, looking frantically around, saw in the corner of the kitchen the *mont-platte*, or dumb-waiter, and essayed to climb into it, but it was too small. Joe pulled him out with such precipitation that Bones crashed in a heap on the floor. Joe pointed and fled. Bones scrambled to his feet, dashed for the door into the hall, heard men enter the front door, shrank back, heard feet above him, and saw a stair at his left. Up this he went. He heard a grenade fall lightly at the foot of the stair, but he was at the top and around the corner before it burst. Across the upper hall was a door with curtained windows in it, and through that door went Bones.

Here was another room similar to the one downstairs, except that there was a sideboard, some comfortable chairs that had plainly been looted from houses in the neighborhood, and in one corner a dilapidated billiard-table. The billiard-table was half buried under a pile of rubbish, and over it was a great hole in the ceiling, through which one might see the shattered beams of the roof, the framework on which the tiles had once rested, and beyond that the blue sky. The shell that had struck the hotel must have exploded on the other side of the wall, or somewhere in that vicinity. This room was in semi-darkness, for the windows were shuttered, and the only light came through the hole in the roof.

"Is that you, Bones?" asked a harsh whisper from across the room.

"Yep. Can yuh see out the window at all?"

"No," whispered Joe, tiptoeing across the room. "The shutters is closed tight. I think the moppers have gone by, because you can hear the bombs down the street. What'll we do now?"

"Let's wait a while an' see if our guys don't come back. They can't have gone far. They'll pull off a counter-attack an' the boche'll run. Then we'll be all right, though it would serve yuh right to get captured for gettin' me into this mess."

"Gettin' you into it? How come gettin' you into it?" cried Joe.

"Shut up, for ——'s sake!" gasped Bones, putting his hand over Joe's mouth. "Where d'yuh think you are, in the Y. M. C. A.? Some one's liable to hear you an' come in here and dig a bayonet into us!"

They both listened but heard no sound of footsteps, only machine-gun fire from the southern edge of the village and the sound of distant grenades.

"Well," said Joe, returning to the former subject, "I didn't get you into no trouble. You got yourself in. How come you followed me up here anyway?"

"You don't suppose I was goin' to stay with that colonel an' have him try me or make a runner outta me, do you? Runners don't have healthy jobs. It's worse than bein' a M. P. Well, he sent you off an' I knew you didn't have no more idea where you was goin' than the man in the moon, so I took after you. I ducked in a shell-hole till they all went by an' come along. Where did you go? Did you find that outfit?"

"No," said Joe. "I wasn't trained to run around here in these fields lookin' for strange outfits. All the trainin' I ever got was sittin' down behind a caisson with a fuse cutter between my knees, and when the sergeant hollered the range I wiggled the dial, an' pushed the handle when Number Four stuck the shell in. That don't give you no ideas on findin' battalions in woods. I should run around tryin' to find battalions for a guy that's goin' to put me in the mill as soon as the battle is over. Well, I seen this town and hooked up with some guys that were comin' this way."

"That's what I figured you'd do," said Bones, "so I done the same. I come in this hotel about one jump ahead of the shell that blew in them winders downstairs. Well, I suppose we got to stick around here a hour or two."

THIS conversation, carried on in hoarse whispers, had the effect of calming their panic to a great extent. Conversation, the sound of the human voice, is a wonderful restorative of courage, and the two continued to talk for that reason. They debated how far the Americans had withdrawn, whether many casualties had been inflicted by the barrage preceding the counter-attack, and how long it would be before the Americans returned and rescued them from their predicament. They could hear men marching by, moving by squads by the sound, they heard the rattle of wheels and the hoarse commands of some one driving a vehicle, the clatter of a rolling kitchen, and all the time, like the accompaniment of an orchestra, a distant chorus of machine-guns, and the far-away explosions of shells.

A low-flying airplane hovered for some time above the town. Joe and Bones watched through the hole in the roof and were finally rewarded by a sight of the airman. He was a German, and even as they looked, he fired a rocket as if in acknowledgment of some signal from the ground, and flew away out of sight.

During the excitement of the battle the two men had had little time to think of themselves, but now that they had nothing to occupy their minds, Nature reasserted herself.

"Joe, you got anything to eat on you?" asked Bones.

"No," said Joe, "where would I get it? Did you see any lunch carts along the way?"

"No, I didn't, but you might have had brains enough to grab up a can of corned willie while you was huntin' for them souvenirs of yourn. I'm hungry an' no mistake."

"You ain't crippled, are you?" returned Joe. "You was just as near as me to any chow. If there was some stiffs around we might rustle somethin' out their packs, but there ain't none in the house, an' we dassent go out in the street."

"Furthermore," added Bones, "I can feel thirst comin' on an' I ain't got a drop in my canteen, because I remember when I emptied it."

"When it comes dark we'll beat it outta here," said Joe. "People don't starve to death in a few hours."

"Say!" cried Bones with cheerfulness, "that thought about stiffs was a bright one

after all. There must be some Jerries around here after all the shootin' we done this morning. Hot dog, I'd like to get hold o' one an' get his canteen. They have stuff in 'em that'd make you think you swallowed a jumpin'-jack. I remember the M. P. give me a drag out of one yesterday morning. A shot of that stuff would put us on our feet."

"We can't do nothin'," said Joe, "till night, or unless our gang comes back beforehand."

Through the rest of the day the two stayed in the upstairs room. Bones discovered that the shutters had lattices at the top, covered by strips of blanket. He and Joe carefully moved a table to the window, and mounting upon it, cautiously lifted the blanket. Through the lattice one had a limited view of the street and the yards behind the houses opposite. Movement had ceased entirely, and the Yanks could see no sign of an enemy.

"I bet they're gone," whispered Joe. "Let's go down an' see."

They tiptoed out to the back stair and sneaked down. The grenade that had been thrown down the hall had dislodged all the plaster and blown in the partition between stair and wall, so that they could lean over and look down the passage and out the door of the hotel. Across the street was a small house, also with an open door. Through this door one could see a man who sat in his stocking feet, scraping the mud from his boots. He had on a little round gray hat, but his coal-scuttle helmet hung from a nail and a bayoneted rifle leaned against the door-jamb. This man whistled to himself, and the music came faintly to the two men on the stair.

"He's probably a sentry," breathed Joe in Bones' ear. "Come on back."

Bones obeyed silently and they went softly back up the stair, treading very carefully and avoiding the chunks of plaster, lest they make a crunching sound under their feet.

"How about the back?" asked Joe. "Don't yuh suppose we might get out that way? It leads right into the fields."

"Let's look," said Bones.

Opposite the glass door were two more doors, but of solid wood. Bones essayed to open one of these, turning the knob very slowly and carefully so as not to make any noise, and then gently pulled on the door, to open it the slightest crack. Alas, the door did not move. Bones gave it a slight tug.

"Careful," warned Joe, "don't make no noise. We might open that door and find a million Germans on the other side."

"It's locked," said Bones, "there ain't no million Germans in there. The room ain't big enough."

"Well, one would be too many," said Joe. "Whyncha peek through the keyhole?"

Bones at once knelt down and applied his eye to the hole. After a long look he arose and brushed the dirt from his knee.

"Have a look," said he.

Joe likewise applied his eye to the hole. It was very light in that room. There was a sheet of green wall-paper hanging, the wall behind it gashed and scarred, and as Joe's eye followed along, he could see a tiny bit of field and trees. This was where the shell had come through, and the whole rear part of the house was in ruins. Joe shifted his gaze to the other side of the room, but the keyhole was not over-large and his view was limited. At that second a hand of steel took hold of the back of Joe's neck.

"Hey, fer ——'s sake!" cried Joe, "who the —— do you think you're takin' hold of?" Joe twisted his head about and beheld Bones with his countenance drawn into the most fearful expression. At the same time he placed his free hand over Joe's mouth.

"Lugrbubub!" said Joe, which means, being interpreted, "Leggo my neck!"

Bones released his hold and signaled to Joe to listen.

Ah! That was what was the matter with Bones! Joe pricked up his ears. From the hall below came the slow and solemn crunch of feet over the plaster on the floor. One man only, from the sound. He had been in the front room and now came down the hall to the back of the house, where they heard him kicking some glass out of the way, the clatter of a door opening, and then the feet clumped into the courtyard behind the hotel.

"Where are all them guns you had?" whispered Bones.

"I left 'em in the kitchen, don't yuh remember? I put 'em on the table. I couldn't carry them an' the beer mugs, too. I explained all that once."

"Yes, yes," said Bones, "don't go through it again. You deserve to get killed. Here's a Jerry in huntin' for us an' us with

no gun. Well, if he goes out without seein' 'em, the first thing we do is to go down an' get 'em. You awful specimen of a half-witted sand-poke, why didn't you keep one gun, just one?"

"Where's the one I give *you?*" asked Joe. "What become o' that?"

"Well," said Bones, "that was different."

"Whaddyuh do with it?"

"I lost it."

"Yuh did like ——," said Joe. "You sold it to that looey I seen you showin' it to. How much did he give you for it?"

"Fifty francs," said Bones, "an' cheap enough."

Joe gave a snort of disgust. Then there was immediate silence, for the man in the courtyard had come back into the hall and was coming toward the foot of the stair. The two at the top were frozen with horror. They were unarmed and here this German was about to discover them. All he needed to do was to look up and they were lost. Each cursed the other for having kept him in the hall when a retreat to the front room was the only wise thing. If the German came into the room, they might both jump on him and prevent his giving the alarm, but he, being at the foot of the stair, had but to give a shout, and duck around the corner of the stair, where he would be safe.

The man in the hall paused and they heard him scraping a match or a lighter, and then the puffing and sucking as he lighted a pipe. Then he went into the kitchen. *Clump, clump, clump* went his feet, they heard him stop, a rattling noise, probably as he examined the pistols on the table, and the clump of his feet as he came out again, went by the foot of the stair without pausing, and so out of the hotel. The two Americans, after listening for a few seconds to be sure the man had gone, arose and went back immediately to the front room, where they breathed freely once more.

"Now what we gonna do?" asked Joe, after some time.

"Well, when I've decided," said Bones, "I'll tell you. There's nuthin' to do but wait till our gang shows up, or night comes an' we can make a sneak. I wish we had somethin' we could knock a man over with—a bayonet or a club or something."

"How about this rumor we heard about the war bein' over?" asked Joe. "S'pose the war got over tonight?"

"Well, then we could have turkey for Thanksgivin'," said Bones. "I wouldn't bank a whole —— of a lot on that."

The two men relapsed into silence. The horror of their position was beginning to weigh upon them. The day was advancing, in fact had nearly run its course, for the strip of sky they could see through the hole in the corner was turning a faint pink. There was no sign of any American advance. They were hungry and thirsty, and as the sun went down, they began to feel cold. Bones, noticing a haze in the sky, predicted rain, a forecast that could hardly go wrong, since it rained at least once every twenty-four hours at this season of the year.

"It's gettin' dark," said Joe, finally, "an' when it's good and dark, we'll go out. We can't be far from our lines."

"That's right," said Bones, "an' maybe we can capture a prisoner or two, an' get their rifles, so that if we snarl up with any boche we'll have somethin' to defend ourselves with."

The knob of the door gave a dry rattle, turned, and the door opened. A man entered, shut the door and spoke in German. It was dark in that room, even when the sun was at its height, but now it was impossible to see. The man spoke again, harshly and angrily, but the two men made no answer. First, they were so paralyzed by the sudden appearance of the third man that they could not utter a sound, and secondly they hoped that he did not know they were there, and was but asking if there was any one in the room. They heard him stalk across the room and Bones hoped that the third man might come near enough so that he and Joe might jump on him and knock him out before he could make outcry, but the German did not come anywhere near them. He had crossed to the window, where they heard him fumbling at the shutters. Suddenly they swung open, and the room was dimly lighted by what was left of daylight outside. The German turned around, and they heard him give a little cough, as if he caught his breath. Then they knew they were seen, and stood up.

"Hello, boys," said the German, "don't let's do nodding rash."

His back was to the light, so that they could not see his face, but he could very well see theirs, and their expressions at the moment were probably such as would give any German soldier some apprehension, he alone with the two of them.

"Don't make no noise," said Bones in a very strained voice that he could with difficulty keep from shaking. "Don't make no noise, or we'll ruin you."

"Hello, boys, good boys," replied the German. "I ain'dt mad mit you. I got lots of friends is Americans. I used to be a stewart on der old *Hamburg*. How is you tonight? Makes it rain, do you t'ink?"

"Yeh, it'll rain," said Joe, "it always does." Conversation languished. The three men were obviously nervous and had little liking for each other's company.

"I didn't know you boys vos here," said the German. "I'm der officer here. I makes my inspections for der night und I vos in der front room und I heard noise mit der feet, so I goes out by der back of der house, and finds no one, und in der galley I finds no one, und so I goes by der door out. Choost I come from der next house out, I t'ink, topside, in der *Unteroffiziersaal*. Ah! der is some of my boys up dere vot should be somevares else. Und oop I valks and here vos you! Ain'dt dot funny! Vot vos you doing here?"

"Yeh, it's funny as ——," said Bones.

"We come in this morning," spoke up Joe, "an' we was just kinda waitin' around to go back to our friends. We wasn't goin' to do you fellars any harm."

"Oh!" said the German, "und so you choost vant to go back to your friends. Goot. Vell, I go mit you. So soon it comes dark ve go."

"You mean you'll take us through your lines and come with us?" cried Bones.

"Sure. Since der beginning of der var I been fighting, und I am sick of it."

"They tell the war's nearly over," said Joe, for which he received a hearty nudge from Bones' elbow.

"Sure, dey says dot. Ve heard it, you bet. Ve vos to eat der Christmas dinner in Paris in nineteen hundert fourteen. Ve vos to be dere dis year py der first August. Ve ain't yet. Anyvay, dey giffs me a bum deal. I'm *Offizierstellvertreuter*, you know, dot's offizier dot does all der work und goes mit der attack, und if he gets killed dey makes anudder vone, but if he don't get killed he can't be no offizier after der var, not even reserve offizier. So dey can go to —— und I take you home, und you tell your boys dot I aind't too bad und used to be goot stewart. Vot?"

"Sure," said Bones, "we'll tell 'em. We'll give you the best meal you ever got in your life. The war'll be over pretty quick an' then you can go back to Germany."

"Vell, I go make der inspections und den I come back mit two overcoats und helmets und den ve go. If any vun says anyt'ing, I am der offizier vot posts der relief. Vell, goot-by, boys, I see you in a minute."

When he was gone, the two Yanks silently shook hands.

"Ain't that luck," said Bones, "to find a guy to show us the way home an' everything, an' then come back with us an' be a prisoner. An' him a officer!"

"Where we goin' back to?" asked Joe thoughtfully.

"Oh, we'll just go back, not to that —— colonel, but to some outfit. Any outfit will welcome yuh if yuh bring in a Jerry officer prisoner. No, we won't go back to that colonel. Here I went an' killed a whole flock of Huns for him an' he says, 'My! my!' an' lights a cigar an' never even offers one to me."

"Let's hunt up a artillery outfit," suggested Joe. "I'm kinda sick of lettin' on to do some job I don't know nuthin' about, like being' a guide or a runner or somethin'. I'd like to go to some battery an' say, 'If you're just out of a good Number Three, I'm the guy. At the command prepare for action, Number Three swings to the ground and raises the caisson apron, lowers the caisson shield, gits out the fuse setter an' sits down. Also issues tow or waste to the gunners.' Boy, what it takes to make a good Number Three, I'm all broke out with."

Here Bones indulged in laughter.

"Ah, you ain't got no brains," said Joe in disgust. "You can't appreciate nuthin'."

Bones laughed again. His amusement was due to the fact that once upon a time the battery commander had been at the observation post, and other batteries being in action at the same time, had asked his own battery to fire a shrapnel which would burst in air above the place where the shells which the officer was to watch would begin to fall. Thus the battery commander would be able to identify the bursts of his own shells. Joe, at this time, was still a member of a gun crew, and it was his duty as Number Three to set the fuse. Joe cut the fuse about eight hundred yards short, so that the shell burst directly in rear of the observation post, ruining the captain's

horse, which was tied in concealment in a thicket. After a four-mile walk in boots and spurs—it being necessary to go by a roundabout way during daylight—the captain arrived at the battery, and inquiring as to who had cut the fuse, condemned Joe to the kitchen. The section chief should have verified the setting of the fuse setter before the shell was fired, and for his neglect he was taken off the gun and sent out to the horse lines. This, however, did not mitigate Joe's offence, so he forthwith took up his duties as K. P.

The two men sat in silence for a long time, telling themselves that their hunger would presently be satisfied, and that their troubles were over. The wind blew through the window, where the shutters were still open, and whistled out again through the hole in the wall. From time to time one of the men would stretch a cramped limb, or shift his weight a bit, and this made a very slight noise. After an hour or so of waiting, Joe whispered aloud, yet as if to himself—

"I honies that guy's shoulder-straps."

"What do I get out of this?" cried Bones, much more loudly than was safe.

"I ain't deaf," remonstrated Joe. "Yuh want the whole boche army in here? You can have his belt, can't yuh?"

Bones grunted and that ended the conversation for another hour. At the end of that time Joe got up and beat his breast to warm himself. Rain fell at intervals and the roof being badly damaged by the shells of the morning, leaked extensively. Joe blew upon his hands, thumped his chest, and listened to the drip of the water. Bones stirred and got to his feet, groaning at the stiffness of his limbs.

"What's keepin' your friend?" he asked Joe.

"*My* friend?" cried Joe, "how come *my* friend? You was the one did all the chewin' with him. *My* friend! I like that."

"Do you mind he said he heard us up here? He must have been downstairs when we went out to the back. I wonder if any one can hear us whisperin'."

"Well, let's not whisper," said Joe, "only it'll be lonesome as —— here waitin' for him if we can't talk to each other. I wish he'd shake a leg. What's that?"

There was a distant sound that came gradually nearer. It resolved into many elements, the steady thud of horses' hoofs, the pound and scrape of the iron shoes on the hard road, the creak of leather and the jingle of chain and the rattle and bump of carriages jolting. Both men immediately knew what the noise was. It was a column of artillery on the march. They went by under the window, the smell of the horses and the murmuring of the men coming up to the two men in the upper room. The column turned off the road, and they could hear it go out into the fields, and the cracking of whips and the cursing as the carriages struck heavy going. Then came commands, short sharp cries, the clatter and bang of shield and apron being secured, and caissons being opened. There was very little confusion, judging by the sound, and in an amazingly short time there was a deep silence. One loud command, a rattle of many breech blocks—*BLAM!* They were off. After the artillery several companies of infantry tramped by, and clumped off out of hearing down the road. The sector was being strongly reinforced.

The American command would have been delighted had it been able to see what good results its feint in this sector had achieved, but the two Yanks in the upper room of the hotel were quite depressed. Neither said anything to the other of their fears, because to give voice to a disquieting apprehension is to make it the worse, and then both Bones and Joe, now that they were really in hard luck, felt it their particular duty to keep each other cheerful.

"Maybe our friend can't git back with all these troops comin' in," said Bones. "Maybe he had to wait a little while. Let's catch some sleep, an' that'll make the time go quicker."

"Yeh," agreed Joe, "that's just what I was thinkin'. Course he wouldn't want to be wanderin' round with two Yanks under his wing with all these krauts goose-steppin' down the street."

THE two essayed to sleep. It was cold and the floor hard, and the American overcoat at best but came to the knee, leaving a goodly extent of leg bare to the breeze, and this leg was only covered by very thin breeches. Joe's overcoat had been torn by the wire, and the tear, getting wider and wider, he had in desperation finished it by tearing a great piece out of his coat. Now when he wanted to sit down, there was no overcoat to sit on for half of his body.

Water seeped down the wall and soaked into the plaster and rubbish on the floor and this in turn soaked into Joe, so that he was very miserable. He did manage to fall asleep, but not for long, for when he awakened, hoping the night was almost gone, his wrist-watch said twelve-thirty. He had given up hope of ever seeing the German ex-steward again, but this he did not tell Bones. Bones on his side, had likewise lost hope, and had been sitting against the wall the whole time, dozing at intervals, and wondering what the German battery was shooting at. The minutes dragged, the rain became a down-pour, and in the short intervals of silence Bones could hear the far-away rattle of machine-guns and the irregular cracking of rifle fire. The boche were attacking the farm.

Suddenly it was day again, a cold dawn streaming in through the window, and Joe up stretching himself and beating his arms. Bones got to his feet, goaning at the agony of stiff legs and sore body.

"Another one o' them rainy days," said Joe. "Come, get up. There's a rollin' kitchen across the street and if we had our nerve we might hit 'em up for a meal."

"Where is it?" asked Bones.

He cautiously crossed the room so that he could see out the window without being seen. The chimney of a rolling kitchen poked out of a shed across the road. Steam issued from the shed and smoke from the chimney. The cook sang. Bones thought sadly that the Germans must have taken considerably territory to have their kitchens in the town. Kitchens are not usually very near the front.

"We can have a window breakfast," said he, "like I used to have in the States when I was out of a job. I'd go by one o' them places where they cook pancakes in the window and watch the guy for a while, an' that was my breakfast."

"It ain't very satisfyin'," remarked Joe. "I wouldn't want it for a steady diet. It's too bad a guy couldn't get a refund for the meals he loses in the Army. We'd have quite a piece o' change comin' to us by the time we got back to our outfit."

"Wouldn't we?" agreed Bones. "But, anyway, our pay goes on just the same; we get our dollar an' ten cents a day whether we do any work or not."

"Let's have another look at the kitchen," suggested Joe, "an' let's be thankful we ain't scrubbin' the pans in it. There's always some cheerful thought no matter how hard up a guy may be."

Neither man said anything about another day of waiting and of suspense nor of a wasted night when they might have made an attempt at escape, instead of waiting for a guide to show up who probably had no idea of returning. Germans coming back from the lines stopped at the kitchen, and the two Yanks heard—or imagined they heard—the sound of slum being poured into mess-kits.

"I got four cigarets left," said Bones. "That's two apiece for two days. That ought to last us till we get back. Now then, we'll have one for breakfast, and smoke the butt for dinner. Supper we won't have none, because some one might see the light, but durin' the day they won't."

"How about the smoke?" suggested Joe.

"Not if we don't go gushin' it out in big gobs."

"Well, let's have one."

Accordingly they each lighted a cigaret. The day advanced, the sun rose and burned away the mist, and the weather gave prospect of being fine. Another squad of men came clumping down the narrow street, probably on their way to the kitchen. Joe listened enviously. The idea of these men eating their fill not twenty yards from where he was starving to death! Bones removed his cigaret from his mouth and calmly rubbed the fire from the end. Then he tucked it behind his ear. Joe, a feeling of apprehension stealing over him, stood motionless. The men in the street had not marched to the kitchen, but had halted outside the hotel.

Feet clumped in, the sound vanished, then was audible again, as the owner of the feet mounted the front stair. The two men in the room looked at each other. One man they might handle, but his friends outside, how about them? Did they know of the Yanks in the upper room or not?

"Hey," cried a voice from the landing, "luncheon is served. Vill you come oudt or vill you have it inside dere?" Laughter from the street and another voice, that of their friend of the night before.

"Come oudt, boys, ve know you're hiding. Ve see you, you liddle rascals."

Feet could be heard running outside, excited exclamations, doors slamming, and all the noise and tumult of a crowd gathering.

The two Yanks in the room remained silent and motionless.

"Come oudt, boys," called the voice from the street again. "Ven you come not oudt, so vill ve send you in a grenade."

"Come on," said Bones, "let's go down."

There being no way out, no manner of escape open, and it being a difficult thing to defy a grenade in cold blood, they opened the door and went into the passage. A German there, armed with a rifle, went precipitately down the stairs. The two followed him, their hands in their pockets, and so went out the door of the hotel into the street.

About the door were grouped a dozen or so armed Germans, and in front of them the Yanks' officer friend of the night before. Behind the men with the bayoneted rifles was a miscellaneous crowd of men in fatigue caps standing about with pipes in their mouths, looking curiously at the two Yanks. There was a moment of embarrassment, in which no one seemed to know what to say or do. It was Bones who broke the silence.

"You're a —— of a man," said he to the officer.

The officer laughed heartily, and amusement was visible on the countenances of several. The officer was not the familiar type of German officer. He was slightly inclined to prominence of stomach, he wore a uniform that was indistinguishable from the privates except by the thin silver shoulder-straps. His head was almost square, and although his peaked cap made it difficult to be sure, he seemed to be quite bald. His soldiers were all men advanced in years, or else very young rosy-cheeked boys. When the officer laughed, they grinned pleasantly, perhaps because he laughed, or perhaps they understood what was going on.

"You mad mit me, vot?" asked the officer. "Vot you tink, a old man like me, old enough to be your fadder, he should make trouble mit two husky young boys like you? Oh, no!"

"Why didn't you tell us you wouldn't come back?" asked Joe. "You big stiff! If we hadn't waited for you we'd have been back to our outfit by now."

"Vell, vot you expect?" said the officer, "you ain'dt got no business coming over here anyvay. Dis ain'dt none of your business. Peoples vot don't mind der business gets into troubles. Here ve have der var all von, and you come in and jump on our backs. Ve never did nodding to you. Ain'dt you ashamed, big strong fellars like you, to come over here and fight midt dese old men! You know vot you do to me? Before der var I was stewart, und now you have take der boat, and I ain'dt got no job no more."

"You're a fine guy, I must say!" said Joe. He had had his mind all made up regarding those shoulder-straps, had counted them already as his, and now alas, they were quite unattainable. The officer made no reply to the remark, save to give an order in German, and the man who had been at the top of the stairs made a slight motion with his hand, as if to say, "Follow me," and slinging his rifle, he prepared to lead the two Yanks away.

"Hey, Steward," said Bones, "we haven't had our teeth in anything chewable for some time. Can you give us a little piece of bread or something?"

"You hungry?" asked the officer. "Sure, we fix it. If it ain'dt just vot you might like, blame der —— English. Dere der vons vot von't let us have no food."

He spoke to the guard, and he obediently led the way to the shed where the rolling kitchen was parked. The crowd broke up and the officer marched away with his men.

"Who would have thought," meditated Joe aloud, "when we was up in that room smellin' the smell from this kitchen, that we'd be gettin' a hand-out from it?"

"If we'd thought that that weinie there was going to double-cross us we'd have crowned him king o' the slop-pail last night, an' took our chance on a getaway. That big squarehead! Wouldn't it make you mad, an' us sittin' around all night, waitin' for him to come back and freezin' ourselves solid an' him somewhere under the blankets snorin' fit to wake the dead!"

They halted at the kitchen, and the cook in suspenders, checked flannel shirt and apron, greeted them with a grin. He and the guard exchanged a few coughs, and the cook grinned again.

"Hungry?" he asked, with an atrocious accent. "Cheeroh, lads, I ged you zoup. Cheeroh? Downhearted? Noooo!"

"What the —— is eatin' him?" asked Bones. "He must think we're limies."

"That's where he learned his English," said Joe, "feedin' limey prisoners."

Two men who were chopping kindling-wood, and another who by the looks was a

K. P. also, came up and grinned cordially. There was nothing hostile in their bearing whatsoever. The cook procured two mess-kits from somewhere and filled the lids with what appeared to be slum, but which nevertheless had a peculiar smell.

"What the —— is this stuff?" gasped Bones.

"Never mind sayin' the 'Soldiers' Grace'," remarked Joe. "Eat it. It's good."

"Ja," agreed the cook, smilingly, "*Fleischbruhe*. Good."

He tendered them some very hard, sour bread, which they ate, being exceedingly hungry.

"He's a good cook," remarked Joe, chewing manfully, for the bread was like rubber. "If he'd been an American, an' you turned up your nose at his hand-out, he'd broke a pan over your head."

Other German soldiers continued to come to the kitchen and look grinningly in, then go away again. Some of them said such English words as they knew and others just smiled in a 'well-fellows-how-do-you-like-it' way, and exclaimed about the sad state of the prisoners' uniforms. American prisoners were not very common, and the Germans liked to have a look at the type of man that was fighting them.

Bones finished his soup and was about to extract a cigaret from the frayed package.

"I lost my butt in the excitement," said he sadly, "an' there's only two left, an' I suppose I ought to offer the cook one. I'll match you to see who gives his cigaret to the cook."

"Match with what—I ain't got any coins, have you?"

"No," said Bones thoughtfully. "Listen, I'll offer him the package, and if he takes the right-hand one it's mine, and if he takes the other it's yours."

Bones thereupon extended the package, but the cook, perceiving that there were but two cigarets therein, shook his head and showed a package of cigarets of his own, on a shelf of the shed with some pans. The two Yanks then thankfully lighted their cigarets and indicated to their guard that they were ready to depart. The guard motioned them to go along, and then seemed to be smitten with a serious thought.

"You got any pistols?" he asked. "You better giff me if you have."

Bones pointed to his empty holster, and Joe opened his arms wide in an invitation to the guard to search him, but the guard grunted in a satisfied manner and the march began.

The road led straight back from the village, and then into woods. Joe cast a sad look behind him. There was a flight of airplanes far off there and he thought sadly that they were over the American lines. He felt then his first wave of realization, the first sickening thought that he was a prisoner, that he had been taken by the enemy without striking a blow, and that when he got home to Turner's Falls he would have a hard time explaining that fact. Bones also kept casting some sad looks to the rear.

"What yuh lookin' at?" asked Joe.

"I was just thinkin' I didn't see no signs of a battle goin' on back there," answered Bones. "I guess there ain't much chance of the boys catchin' up with us an' pullin' off a rescue. I better save half o' this butt, I guess." Accordingly he rubbed the fire out on his helmet and put the butt in the lining.

"Maybe the war's over," suggested Joe.

"Huh! It's over for us, anyway,"

'Cheer up," comforted Joe, "we ain't dead."

They marched steadily along the road, almost an hour. Just as the Yanks were about to suggest a halt, the guard broke his silence, and directed them to sit down in the ditch. They obeyed and unbuttoned the overcoats, for the sun was getting warm, and their exercises made their blood leap.

"How much farther we got to go?" Joe asked the guard.

"We choost look for der *Kommandandtur*," said the guard. "Choost von little minoot."

"What do you think o' knockin' this man fer a gool," asked Bones softly, looking at his feet.

"Naw, never do," objected Joe. "Never do. We're too far behind the lines. I don't crave to commit suicide right off. Let's not get in a sweat. We're gonna get out o' this somehow, ain't we?"

"You bet," said Bones. "Hey," he continued to the guard, "what's in the canteen? Give us a drink, will you?"

He pointed to the tiny canteen the guard carried, and the guard at once unhooked it and handed it to him. Bones took a drink and then met Joe's questioning glance.

"Water," remarked Bones with deep disgust.

"I don't want none," said Joe, heaving a sigh. "That soup cured my thirst."

The guard got to his feet and the party proceeded. They came to a cross-road and then to an old sign, with the word "*Kommandantur*" in black letters on it. There was an arrow on this sign that pointed to a narrow path, and along this the guard directed the procession. They entered some woods, and had walked through them about a minute, when Joe, who was in the lead, uttered an exclamation. They had come to a stretch of trees that showed signs of wear. The trees were split, and in some cases torn in two. The fibers of their shattered stumps bristled like a shaving-brush, an effect that only shell-fire gives. The guide seemed disturbed and muttered to himself in German.

He went on a few feet and examined what looked like the cellar of a house that has been destroyed by fire. This was the remains of a concrete dugout, after a large naval shell had rebounded from it. The dirt all around was churned up like a field prepared for planting, saplings were scattered about, bits of boxes, shredded paper, a newly broken chair, its upholstery dragging forlornly in the mud, a bundle of rags that seemed to have once been an overcoat littered the ground. The guide went hastily along the road away with his prisoners, and then halted with loose jaw. There had been a cantonment there, a bivouac, a camp. There had been little rustic huts, a casino, a mess-hall, and a number of little places to sit under the trees and take beer. These buildings might be traced as one traces buildings in excavations of ancient cities, long ago crumbled in ruin. The work of destruction here, however, was new. It had probably been done the previous night, since the guard to whom the cantonment seemed to be known, was quite surprized and disturbed by the sight. There were great pits in the ground, the huts had been churned about as if by a cyclone, broken furniture and bits of equipment were scattered broadcast.

"This here has been bombarded," said Bones, "and they sure done a thorough job."

"I'll say," agreed Joe. "There ain't a souvenir in the place. I seen a belt buckle even that was cut in two."

"Look now vot you vent an' done," said the guard in a tone of reproach. "See all dose liddle houses broke down, vot ve builded so careful. Ve lived in dem four years an' now you break dem to pieces. Dot's no way for men to do. Vot good dot do, to break down a man's liddle house vot he lives in. All right, you see ven ve vin dis var ve make mud pies oudt of New York. Now vere ve go, heh?"

THE guard looked sadly at the shattered trees of the grove and the piles of matchwood that had once been huts. All sign of dead and wounded had been immediately removed, so that the sight of their dead comrades would not weaken the spirit of the Germans, nor encourage their enemies should they advance that far. The guard seemed at a loss what to do.

"Vell, ve go to der oder vun," said he finally, and led them down a path that went out at right angles to the one by which they had come in.

The woods still bore evidence of the fury of the bombardment, the lighter trees leaned at an angle, pointing toward the German lines, as if blown over by a high wind, and the path along which they walked was liberally sprinkled with new shell-holes. Eventually they came out upon a high road, and the guide directed them to follow it northward.

It seems to be an inevitable thing that a soldier at the front, during a battle, must always be tired. In the excitement and the turmoil he forgets food, and sleep is impossible. The demands upon a man's strength are tremendous, however, and eventually his whole system begins to break down, his mind will not function, and it is only with the greatest agony that he still stays upon his feet and walks. The two Yanks had had little sleep the last two nights, and but two meals, and their feelings were beginning to border on the miserable.

"Man, I'm about all in," remarked Bones, during a short halt, while the guard scrutinized a sign-post.

"I wish I had a cup of black Java and a butt," replied Joe. "A cup of Java makes a new man out of a guy. Nice and hot, you know."

"Yeh, I know," said Bones sadly. "I got a butt in my hat, but let's save it; we may need it more later on."

The guard at this minute came back to them with an anxious countenance.

"I don'd know vere ve are," said he sadly. "Ve better go back und I talk to der offizier. You blow my house all up und dey move der *Kommandantur* and now I don'd know my vay around."

"Where's this place you was goin' to take us to?"

"It's too far," answered the guard. "I ain'd got no business running around mit two prisoners. Der offizier says I should take you by der *Kommandantur*, and dere ain'd no *Kommandantur* no more, so vill ve go back und tell him."

"Oh ——!" cried Joe, "ain't that a square-head for yuh!"

He and Bones had been sitting in the ditch and they now threw themselves flat on their backs.

"We ain't goin' nowheres till we get rested," said Bones. "We're gonna sit right here."

The guard unslung his rifle.

"Gid up," said he calmly.

"Think we can make it?" asked Bones. His meaning was clear to Joe. Joe began to gather his feet under him ready for a spring. The guard presented the muzzle of his rifle and his thumb slid along the breach as he took off the safety lock. Suddenly a strange voice spoke in German. The guard straightened up and saluted. Joe let himself back on the ground again.

"Who's your friend?" he asked Bones.

A small automobile, very small indeed, not much larger than a motor-cycle, had appeared, and was now coughing and shaking in the road. If the men had not been so absorbed in their own affairs, they must have heard it approach. It was painted gray, with the imperial eagle in white on the door. There were two officers in it, one of whom had descended and was talking to the guard. The other stayed in the car and after one contemptuous glance at the Yanks through his monocle, paid them no further attention. The officer who was talking to the guard turned and addressed the prisoners.

"Stand up!" ordered the guard.

"T'—— with him," replied Bones. "He ain't no better'n we are."

"Come on," said Joe, "let's stand up. That guard will let sunlight through us if we don't. They'd make him a corporal for doin' it probably."

They thereupon stood up and the officer addressed them in German. Then he went through their pockets, finding nothing, however, except a letter in Joe's shirt pocket, which, after looking over and over and holding to the light, the officer handed to the guard, who buttoned it up in his own blouse. The officer then looked at the men's collar ornaments and seeing the crossed cannons of the artillery, smiled and nodded in satisfaction. He asked the guard a question, the guard nodded vigorously and the officer seemed very pleased. He got back into his bathtub auto, spoke to the other officer a while and then rattled away.

"Forward, boys," said the guard, "ve go by der big pen. Der offizier giff me a letter to der trucks to carry us."

"What's he so tickled for to capture an artilleryman?" asked Joe.

"He said did ve take you off a gun," replied the guard, "und I said 'Ja.' If he should t'ink ve got to der guns all der better. He vouldn't be mad I vas walking around mit you."

They tramped down the road, each step tiring them more and more, each step making them weaker and weaker. They implored the guard to let them rest, but he muttered something about a truck and refused to halt. They passed several artillery positions, where officers came to the edge of the road and cursed them feelingly. The farther back they got, the more bitter the German soldiers they met became, and they were glad that it was daytime and there were not many Germans about. A truck clattered by them, making a terrible racket, for it had steel tires instead of rubber. The guard called out to the driver to halt, but the driver, seeing the Americans, yelled abuse at them and refused to stop.

At last, going through a stretch of woods, Bones proposed that they fall down and refuse to move.

"He'll kill us if we do," said Joe. "There ain't no use in gettin' killed yet."

"Well, let's kill him," whispered Bones. "Let's kill him and grab his rifle an' beat it. He's got it slung an' if we jumped on him quick he'd never know what hit him."

"Naw, let's wait. I ain't crazy about killin' him."

"He got a drag with you or something?" asked Bones sarcastically.

"Naw, he ain't got no drag, but he ain't got nuthin' in his canteen but water an' it ain't worth the risk."

Around a bend in the road they came upon three trucks, all bearing the device of the German eagle and various signs, three triangles intertwined, a red heart, etc., indicating the unit to which the trucks belonged. The guard engaged in long discourse with the non-commissioned officer in charge, and displayed an order that the officer from the little auto had given him. This seemed to offset the non-com's objection and the guard gruffly ordered the two to get into the truck. They clambered over the wheel and swung around and over the tail-gate.

"Huh!" said Bones, sniffing, "this truck stinks!"

"It smells kinda strong of German, don't it?" agreed Joe. "Never mind, it's better than walkin'. Boy, I'm glad to get a load off my feet." He sat down in the bottom of the truck and Bones finally joined him.

"Where's the guard?" asked Joe.

"He's sittin' out there on the bank with the drivers, an' they're puttin' away a lunch o' bread an' sausage."

The two spoke no further word and after a while Bones' head dropped on his knees, and Joe lay down upon the floor of the truck. Presently they both slept, worn out by their exertions of the past two days, and the mental torture of their predicament.

The guard and the drivers sat in the ditch and ate. After dinner the drivers slept, but the guard maintained his vigil. He had received an order that allowed him to put his prisoners into any truck he met. He had met three trucks and put his prisoners in one of them. The guard did not like to walk any more than his two charges did. The drivers were awaiting the return of an officer who had gone off searching for a superior, and when the officer returned the trucks would make their way to the base where the prison pen was. The day advanced and the officer still tarried. In the truck the two prisoners awoke, slept again, awoke a second time, and finding they were still in the same place, went back to sleep to forget their hunger and their misery. Toward sunset the officer returned, the drivers scrambled into the trucks and the train moved off, the guard discreetly climbing into the truck with his prisoners as soon as the officer was visible down the road. The banging of the wheels awakened the Americans and as they were about to look over the gate to see where they were, the guard ordered them to the other end of the truck, for it was getting dark and he had no desire to have these men lose themselves over the tail-gate. The train bumped and jounced along the road into the night, carrying the two farther and farther into Germany.

The guard, who had stood by the tail-gate, began to show signs of unrest. He watched closely the signboards at the cross-roads; he swung his head out and called to the drivers, but they could not hear him. The prisoners seemed quiet enough, sunk as they were in their own sad thoughts, so the guard clambered over their feet, and went to the front of the truck, where he called through the little window behind the driver.

"Head of an ass," he cried in German, "whither goest thou?"

"That know we not," said the driver. "We follow the truck ahead, which follows the first, in which rides the officer."

The guard clambered back to the tail-gate and hung over it, waiting until the next cross-road should be reached. They rattled by in a cloud of dust, and though the guard could see the huge signs with their black arrows, it was too dark to distinguish the names of the towns. The guard stamped upon the floor of the truck and cursed heartily in German, while the two Yanks watched him in astonishment. The truck shot around a curve, and came to a grinding stop. The guard looked out and then ordered his prisoners to dismount. They jumped down and found themselves in the midst of a crowd of pushing Germans who, having looked at them curiously, paid them no further attention.

"Lamp this, will yuh?" cried Joe. He pointed out to Bones a long row of trucks, of which the three that had brought them formed the end, and beside the row of trucks another row of what appeared to be men lying down.

"Stiffs!" gasped Bones.

"Sure stiffs!" said Joe. "These here trucks come up to take 'em back to the ovens! No wonder the trucks stunk."

"Come," said the guard nervously, "ve go someveres."

He motioned to them to turn around and leave the trucks into which the crowd of men were already loading the ghastly cargo. The Yanks discovered after a few steps that they were in the streets of a very

miserable town, a wretched place of small one-storied houses and lean-to sheds, hideous in the darkness.

The guard went to one of these, and called in the door. He was answered from the interior, and grunting a reply, he shoved the prisoners down the street a little way, till he met a friend, and, bidding the friend watch them, he went apparently into the bowels of the earth, but he really entered a cellar, for the Yanks could see the gleam of light as he opened the door and went in. Shortly there came sounds of conversation, vigorous and unrefined. Several people talked at once, and all angrily. There was a crash of glass.

"Sounds like pay night in a drunkard's house," meditated Joe.

"Don't it!" replied Bones. "Listen, kid, do you notice anything peculiar about this place?"

"Naw," said Joe, "only it's blacker than the inside of a hunk o' coal."

"Well, lookit," said Bones mysteriously, but the sudden opening of the cellar door and the scuttling up the steps of their former guard put an end to conversation.

The guard and the other soldier conferred in whispers, and the guard motioned the prisoners on again.

"What's the matter," asked Joe, "rooms all full?"

"Der officer said he vouldn't giff me no receipt for you. He said you couldn't stay by der town at all." The guard was sullen and angry, for it was night, he was cold and hungry, and his prisoners were a grave charge on his hands. He stopped at what seemed to be a headquarters, for there were two armed sentries at the door.

The guard spoke to one, and the latter summoned a non-com, who, the instant the guard began to speak, fairly foamed at the mouth. He roared aloud, and waved his arms in wild gestures. He came over to Bones and Joe and inspected them, swearing at them most vehemently the while. He then started to return, shaking his fist in the guard's face, but a sudden thought occurred to him, and coming back, he tore Joe's helmet from his head. Then he cursed a little more, and retired into the house, the helmet in his hand. The guard appealed to the sentries, who answered him roughly, and even went so far as to give him a shove.

"We ain't among friends," said Joe, as they went down the street once more. "One o' them sentries give me a good root as I went by him. What d'yuh suppose that —— wanted my helmet for?"

"You ain't the only souvenir hunter on the front," said Bones. "Say, listen now, I was askin' you did you notice anything funny about this place? You says no. Did it strike you all these birds are wearin' their helmets, and the gang we seen all day was just wearin' them round caps?"

"Well, what of it?" asked Joe. "Maybe they're scared of air raids."

"Lookit little Hans," said Bones, as the guard signaled them to halt again, "he's goin' in an' try an' see can we flop here tonight. He's got a thankless job."

The guard came out of this place more rapidly than he had from any of the others. He stood eyeing them a long time.

"Vell, vot should I do?" he asked them finally. "Dey von't let me leave you no place. No vun vill giff me a receipt. Dey say I should let you sleep in der street all night."

He thought a long time and suddenly forming a resolution, he shouldered his rifle, grunted, "Move on," and marching at their side, led them back the way they had come.

They went back down the same street, splashing through unseen puddles, stumbling against rocks, bumping into mysterious men that hurried out of the shadows, and drawing into a corner to let a long column go by. The guard no longer stopped at the houses, but marched rapidly along. He was beside Joe, and the Yank, happening to glance at him, saw that the guard was observing him closely. The guard, meeting Joe's eye, shifted his gaze immediately.

"Der —— Americans," muttered the guard, "vhy der —— you don'd stay home and not monkey mit war I don't know."

The Americans noticed suddenly that the road they were on was deserted. No longer could they hear men marching, nor the clattering of wagons and trucks. Before this thought had been thoroughly digested, they passed a huge white sign, ghostly in the darkness. One word was visible—"*Gefahrlich*"—and then some smaller ones, and a final word—"*Beobachtung!*"

The guard evidently did not see it, for he was looking at Joe. The men came suddenly out on the crest of a hill, and felt the night wind in their faces. Below them stretched

a wide plain, a dark blot in the night, sweeping away to the stars on the horizon. The plain twinkled with lights. They soared and floated and fell as far as the eye could reach. There were frequent flashes of red fire, and great flares of yellow. A sound came from the valley like surf, murmuring upon a shore; they could hear the surge of a wave, the crash of it breaking, and the rattling of the pebbles as it receded.

"It's the front," cried Bones. "He's brought us back to the front! LOOK OUT!"

Joe, hearing that wild cry, threw himself on his face. He heard a grunt, and saw over his shoulder the gleam of a bayonet, then there was a thud, and the sound of Bones giving profane language. Joe leaped to his feet and beheld in the darkness the guard trying to skewer Bones, who had hold of the other's rifle. Joe was on the guard's neck, had a strangle hold, then the three men went to the ground. There was a pound of feet on the road and as Joe jumped clear with the guard's rifle in his hand he could see some dark shapes converging on him. The guard and Bones rolled apart, and the guard scrambled to his feet and moved on Joe. He gave a little skipping hop as Joe lunged at him, then he was inside the bayonet, had seized the barrel of the rifle, shoved it out of the way, and grabbed with hooked fingers for Joe's eyes with his other hand. A shell shrieked at them, and Joe, with the strength of despair, kicked the German so vigorously in the stomach that he let go of the rifle and reeled back into the darkness. Then the shell burst, and all was obliterated in one great crash of sound.

JOE, in the ditch, heard a voice calling through the dust and the smoke. He stood up, though stones still rattled down from the sky.

"That you, Bones? Yuh all right?"

"Yup. Run like ——!"

A shape rose at Joe's side, but this time Joe functioned well with the bayonet. Another man tore at him from the road, but as Joe raised his weapon, he recognized Bones' reed-like form, and the two dashed into the brush beside the road. Men could be heard running, and other shells, several of them, arrived simultaneously. Some struck in the road and some in the woods, and then, with true American prodigality, a small-sized bombardment of the road began. The two Americans ran down hill, crashing through the woods, and finally when they were quite breathless, they lay down in a thicket and gasped like fish out of water. The ghostly sign they had seen was one that bore the word "dangerous," and beneath that the notice that the road was under observation by the enemy, and that passers-by must use the trench. Whether the men were seen from the American lines on the white road, or whether they just happened to run into a periodic salvo was impossible to tell. Anyway, the Americans who had fired those shells had done a good turn that they little dreamed of.

"Boy, we got away from 'em, didn't we?" exulted Joe, as soon as he had breath enough to speak.

"I'll say," agreed Bones, "an' we want to stay away from 'em, too. If them shells hadn't landed about when they did we wouldn't have made it. There was a young division o' boche came pilin' out of a trench by the road." He paused a moment. "I hope that guard of ours got killed. I handed him a paste on the nose he won't forget right away. That ——! He took us up there to stick us!"

"Did he?" asked Joe, "what did he do that for? I never done nothin' to him. Man, when he made that pass at me with his bayonet, I near lost my breakfast, I ain't kiddin' yuh."

"Shhsh!" said Bones. Us on our way! We must be near the front an' it won't take us long to get home, if some boche don't spray us with a machine-gun first. Come on, down-hill."

The two proceeded cautiously through the thick brush. As long as they were going down-hill they knew they must be in the right direction. Every few steps they would pause and listen, and hearing, no hostile sound in the immediate vicinity, they would proceed. They were going through an area that was well back of the lines, and though it was probably all prepared for defense in case of need, it had no immediate garrison. Moreover, any one who did hear them as far back as this locality was, would not be suspicious. Branches struck them in the faces, caught at their clothes and tripped them up. The rifle was a sore hindrance, catching in trees, and being swung around by branches, so that Joe was tempted to throw it away many

times, but refrained, for it was their only weapon. They came at last to the foot of the hill, where the woods stopped at the edge of a field. The night was clear and starlit, though there was no moon. The field stretched far on either side, and it would be madness to try to cross it. The two crouched behind a small hillock, and with lips at each other's ears, consulted.

"Now what?" began Joe.

"How the —— do I know?" replied Bones.

"Well, you carry this —— rifle a ways, will you? My arm's ready to drop off."

"Give us." The rifle changed hands and Bones leaned it carefully against a tree, ready for any emergency.

"How come we got carried back to the front?" asked Joe. "How do you know that ain't a mirage we seen, or something like that? I don't hear no battle goin' on now."

"Well, there's one goin' on an' don't forget it," said Bones. "You mind the guard kept watchin' the posts an' everything, an' then went an' asked the driver something? Well, they must have got a change in orders an' instead of goin' out to the base, they had to go back to the front again after more stiffs. Well, when we got to where the stiffs were, this guard lugs us round tryin' to find some one to take us in, which they wouldn't, bein' sore on us, so he gets nervous as ——."

"Yeh," agreed Joe, "bein' away from his outfit an' everything all day an' it night an' all that way to walk back."

"Well, he got sick of walkin' around with us, so he takes us out in the woods an' tries to sink his bayonet in us as the best way to get rid of us. I just happened to see him drag it off his shoulder an' draw back to shove it into you. He done it quick as a flash. An' then the place rained Germans."

Shells moaned overhead, and burst up the hill. It was probably the Americans strafing the road again.

"Let's go," said Joe nervously.

"Where the —— will we go? If we go outta these woods we'll get crowned."

"There's a little clear space over there," said Joe. "I'm goin' over and see what I can see."

"Go ahead."

Joe crept out of the shadow of the hillock, and feeling his way got over to the open space. It was just light enough for him to see that it was a sort of clearing, surrounded by small huts. These might contain Germans, and he must not linger. His hand brushed a board and as he stopped instinctively and felt about, he found he was standing by a table, and that there was a roof of branches over his head. He began to feel about.

There were cooking utensils there, forks, plates of tin and pans, that rattled slightly as he touched them. Joe had hoped to find a knife, but could discover none. Suddenly there was the sound of an opening door, the tiniest imaginable needle of light showed, and then quiet again. Joe seized the first thing he could get hold of and hurried back. A voice spoke in German right in his ear and Joe immediately smote in the direction of the sound. *Bop!* Then silence. Another door opened somewhere, there was a question hurled into the darkness, muttering, and then the door closed again. Joe felt about with his hand. The body of the man that had spoken to him was at his feet, and this, Joe with great effort dragged into a clump of bushes. Then he listened. Silence.

"Bones!" whispered Joe. "Bones, you ——, where are you?"

"That you, Joe?" came a faint reply.

"No, fer ——'s sake, it's the Kaiser! Come over here an' lend me a hand!"

Presently Joe heard breathing, and then a hand brushed at his shoulder. This hand Joe seized and carried to the German.

"Grab hold," said Joe, "an' let's drag him somewhere where we ain't so public."

"How come drag him? Leave him lie."

"Lie ——! I'm gonna go through him. He may have a couple of diamond rings."

"Naw, go through him here," protested Bones. "This place is alive with krauts. Frisk him here. Look, open his coat and there—" Bones was gone with a sound of scattering leaves. Joe dared not move. His heart pounded and he clutched his weapon, whatever it was. He heard no sound of approaching feet, no hostile challenge.

"What's eatin' you?" he whispered into the darkness. "Bones, come back here!"

"Come away from that," came the faint reply. "Come away!"

"What the —— do you mean, come away? Come back here, he won't bite."

"Come away!" cried Bones, much louder

than was safe. "That's a woman; you killed a woman!"

Joe recoiled in horror, and plaintively whispered for Bones to reveal himself. The two soldiers crouched at the foot of a tree.

"How come a woman?" gasped Joe. "They don't have women at the front."

"Sure they do," replied Bones. "I seen pictures of 'em in the papers. They chain 'em to machine guns an' everything."

"How d'yuh know it's a woman?"

"I felt her corsets," said Bones. Joe considered.

"Bones," said he, "you been drinkin' outta some Jerry's canteen again. I don't believe it. That guy had mustaches like a tom-cat's. I'm goin' back."

"Well you can go," said Bones. "I won't."

Thereupon Joe crawled away, and after a long time returned clinking.

"Naw, that wasn't no woman," said Bones, "he had a head like an onion. It was a fat old officer. The son of a gun, to wear corsets! Lookit, Joe, I got offa him a pair o' field-glasses, belt, pistol, and shoulder-straps an' you know what I crowned him with? One o' them stew pots made outta brick with the big handle like the frogs have."

"Don't I get no divvies?" asked Bones enviously.

"You do like ——. Last time you done the killin' but this time I done it, an' you wouldn't even help me frisk him."

"Well, I ain't much of a guy for robbin' the dead!" remarked Bones.

Joe snorted and was about to reply, but there was a sudden rush of feet, and grunts and panting breath. It was right at hand also. The two leaped to their feet without further parley, and fled. They ran panic-stricken, with no thought of their danger, directly out into the field and across it. A machine-gun went into action behind them, there was shouting and scattered pistol and rifle shots. Joe suddenly fell headlong with a tremendous splash, and Bones, checking himself just in time, leaped into a small brook that crossed the field diagonally.

There was some shelter from the banks and the two crouched there, hoping that the darkness would favor them, and that the direction of their flight had not been noticed. Their chances in this part of the sector were good, for there was no garrison in these fields, and though the noise and commotion they had made would surely be the subject of investigation, no one would attribute it to Americans, but rather to drunken roisterers of their own army. The gun that had fired was undoubtedly an anti-aircraft weapon, for there would be no regular machine-gun emplacements this far back.

"This water's colder than ——," remarked Bones. "Let's be movin'. I don't hear no one."

"Come on," agreed Joe. "I'm gonna catch my death o' cold runnin' round here with wet feet an' no hat."

"Well you won't have no kick comin' if you don't get a hunk o' iron through your skull," advised Bones. "Let's see how far we can go in this brook. It's cold, I know, but we'll be a —— of a lot colder if we walk through that field, an' we'll be stiff, too." The brook was shallow and the men had not much trouble in creeping along under its banks, stopping every so often to listen, and to stretch the kinks out of themselves. They had one cheering thought, that as long as they followed the brook they were going in the direction of the American lines. When they put up their heads they could see the flares going up, and the sound of machine-guns was clearer.

Unexpectedly they came to an obstruction. There was a pile of barbed wire in the brook, and progress was barred. They halted and proceeded to take breath while each thought what to do. It would be simple enough to crawl out on the bank and go around but for the fact that on the left was the black mass of a farm-yard wall, and there might be Germans in the farm.

After some minutes' thought, Bones leaned over to Joe and whispered:

"Got any bright thoughts? What do you think, will we try to make it along the bank?"

"Boy," replied Joe, "I wish I could 'a' gone through that guard of ours. I sure wish I could have."

"For ——'s sake," cried Bones, "don't you ever think of nothin' but souvenirs?"

"You mind he's got a letter o' mine," said Joe. "It's a letter from a girl. She ain't my finance nor nothin' like that. She ain't much of a girl, but all the same I ain't keen about havin' the boche smackin' their lips over her letters."

"Listen, skull," said Bones, "do we go out on the grass or not?"

"Come on," said Joe. "If we stay here, we'll freeze to death. I ain't had no feelin' in my feet the last hour."

Without further comment they went up the bank and into the field. There was no sign of Germans. They put up their heads and looked all around, just as a snake does, and then they proceeded to crawl on. They came to a pit, nicely lined with straw, but empty. This they circled and found another some distance farther on. The farm loomed on their right, and now they could see that it was not a farm, but the first house of a village. They dared not consult as to the best move, for the village was undoubtedly as full of Germans as a hive of bees, and they would come swarming out just as angrily at the first alarm.

The pits they had encountered were for machine-guns, and the place must be strongly organized for defense. A deep discouragement took possession of them. They were cold and hungry, lost in one of the wildest parts of northern France in a wilderness of hills and woods, and thickets, and an unknown distance behind the German lines. They might get along very well for a short distance, but the closer they came to the front the thicker the German posts would be, the greater the chance of discovery, and the surer the chance of immediate death. Perhaps it would be better to surrender now, for at least the Germans here would not be apt to shoot them on sight.

Suddenly Joe gripped Bones' arm. Men were approaching, talking softly among themselves. The two Yanks tried their best to burrow deeper into the ground, and to hold their breaths to be the more silent. The newcomers approached. They were coming from the left, and perhaps were going into the town. There must be a path there. The boots clumped nearer. There was a smell of Germans, that smell composed of old clothes, leather, stale tobacco, and chloride of lime. The men tramped past, but instead of continuing into the town, they turned, their feet clattered and thumped with hollow loudness, and then the sound was lost. Bones jerked his comrade's arm. Joe crawled forward, and Bones jerked his arm again.

"Follow 'em," breathed Bones. "The Huns'll think we belong to that gang. The two got to their feet and walked after the Germans. The first few steps they took they felt as if they were walking on the edge of a bottomless gulf, into which they might at any moment fall. Each pace they took they listened for a challenge, for the crack of a rifle, the clatter of a machine-gun.

They came to a bridge and their feet boomed across it, but their hearts pounded with such clamor that they scarce heard the noise of their feet. Bones took off his helmet. Joe was bareheaded, and seen against the sky, a bareheaded man might look like a German with a fatigue hat on, but if Bones' helmet was seen, its shape would be a dead give-away.

On the other side of the bridge was a path and the two followed it. Ahead they could hear the Germans sliding in the mud, and the sound of their voices. After the first minute the Americans were a little calmer. They had not been discovered, and every step they took was that much nearer home. Bones had begun to think that they might be able to find a refuge in these fields somewhere where they could wait until the American advance rescued them, but that might be weeks, they had no food, nor any blankets, and to have any sleep in that region, a man needed plenty of bed-covering.

The two men had forgotten their weariness in the excitement, and although their wet feet began to hurt, they kept on, getting more confidence with every step, as they remained undiscovered, and the sound of the bursting shells grew nearer. They were falling quite regularly on their right, and the two could also hear that silky rustling that told of shells going from the German lines to the Americans, passing high overhead.

They began to realize that they were getting near the front lines. Twice they had passed through belts of barbed wire, heard men muttering, and seen the gates by which the way was closed. The gates lay beside the path, and at one place two men stood by them. The two Yanks thought all was lost, but the men had not even looked at them. It was very dark, and men walking look very much like other men. Moreover, unless their suspicions are definitely aroused, sleepy soldiers are not overcurious.

The affair was going very well, thought Joe. They could walk right along behind this bunch until they got to their own lines.

They might even take the Germans as prisoners. Joe still had the pistol he had taken from the officer and this was certainly enough to overawe a few Germans with. Bones, on his part, began to think that they drew too near to those clattering machine-guns. Moreover, he had the uncertain feeling of being in the presence of a multitude of unseen witnesses. Suppose day should come before they had returned to their own lines? What if the night turned to day and discovered them in the midst of the German army?

Bones noticed that he could no longer hear the sound of feet ahead of him. Had the men halted, or had the path come to an end, and had they gone on across a field that muffled the sound of their steps? Joe had also noticed the cessation of sound, for his hand grasped Bones' sleeve. The two halted by common consent and listened. Ah, good! There were the footsteps! Faint indeed, but still audible. They became clearer as the men listened. Clearer! Joe's grasp tightened like a vice. The blood of the two Yanks rushed to their hearts. The footsteps that they now heard were behind them and drawing rapidly nearer.

In such instants of sudden panic a man's only thought is immediate blind flight. Ahead the enemy, and behind the enemy. Therefore flee from the path into the fields. Joe leaped to one side, but a solid barrier prevented him. This barrier twanged and tore at his clothes. There was a belt of barbed wire there. Bones had jumped to the other side. The ground disappeared under his feet, but the drop was a short one, not over two feet, and he landed floundering, knee deep in mud and water. On the path above, Joe had torn himself loose from the wire, and completely unnerved, for the newcomers sounded as if they were but an arm's length away, he felt madly about for Bones, but his hands met nothing but darkness.

"Bones, where are you?" he cried.

"Shut up, you —— idiot, and help me outta this swamp," replied Bones.

A deep hush followed the sound of the English words. Joe, giving himself up for dead, and feeling that strange urge that men have in such moments, to kill as many as he could before he himself succumbed, drew the officer's pistol from his pocket, and pulled the trigger. Either that pistol had had no safety catch, or the officer had been foolish enough to carry it released, for the pistol exploded gloriously. Joe howled a war-cry.

"Let 'em come on," he shouted, and his pistol spat fire.

A hand seized his ankle, and his feet shot out from under him as he went hurtling into the marsh beside the path.

"Come outta that, for —— sake," said a voice at his feet, "yuh think you're Buffalo Bill?"

BANG! A sheet of flame lighted the surroundings and then appeared to be extinguished by a cloud of smoke. By the light of that instantaneous flash, Bones had seen the bushes and reeds of the swamp, and the wall or bank along which the path had led. One of the parties above had thrown a grenade, and if Joe had stayed on the path it would have finished him. A machine-gun clattered with ear-racking noise. It was quite close at hand. A flare went up and plopped directly overhead. It lighted the marsh; it showed a belt of wire running along the side of the path, another crossing the marsh, the end of the bank on which the path ran, a group of men on the path apparently busy about a gun—and then the sector came to life.

At least a dozen grenades exploded like a bunch of firecrackers, machine-guns swelled into a tremendous roaring, and shells began to fall like flakes of snow. The two Yanks crouched in the marsh and trembled. They had escaped death by bayonet, bullet and bomb, but they were now likely to die from sheer terror. The water in the marsh was bitter cold.

THE situation of the two Yanks was indeed pitiable. Bones had lost his tin hat, and Joe the officer's field-glasses. They were now very near their own lines, but that was the most dangerous place of all. The place where the trucks had come for the dead Germans had been about five or six kilometers from the advanced positions. The village that the brook had led them to was the billet of the machine-gunners in this part of the defense system, and the party that they had followed was a crew going up to the front. Another crew had been just behind and hence the different sentries the Americans must have passed had not been suspicious, judging them to belong to either one of the two crews. This was also the

reason they had found the gates in the wire open. They had gone from the field on to the causeway over the marsh without noticing it in the dark. The first gun-crew had jumped off the causeway to go to their position, and then the Yanks had heard the second crew behind them.

When Joe had called and Bones had answered, the first thought in every German's mind that heard them was that American patrols were out. Joe had fired upon the crew behind, and they had thrown a grenade in retaliation. The light had gone up while they were setting up their gun, and the Germans that saw them immediately fired upon them, believing them to be Americans. The German morale was not all it used to be, and a group of men seen in the light of a flare, which is too bright for really clear vision, might easily be taken for enemy raiders. Machine-guns opened on this second crew, who fired back while they lasted, and in the midst of this confusion and uncertainty, arrived the shells of the Americans' preliminary bombardment, the fire preceding an attack. They burst in the marsh, beyond the causeway, on the causeway, like boys diving into a swimming-pool.

"*Whoop!*" one would go, and hurl a half ton or so of mud into the air. "*Wow!*" would go another one, and then two, taking each other's hands, would land together in the deepest part of the swamp and send a great sheet of mud and water high in the darkness. This mud and water would fall again, and splash and surge and patter, and then another shell would send it high once more. The Yanks clung to the side of the causeway, drenched by the flying water, pelted with stones and mud, half stunned by the continuous crash of the shell bursts, and chilled to the marrow. Bones began to cough. His lean frame was not meant to stand exposure.

"Cheer up," shouted Joe, "maybe the war'll be over soon. It might stop tonight."

"Don't be a —— fool," replied Bones. "We got a much better chance o' meetin' some Yanks pretty quick if they follow this barrage."

"It'll be comfortin' to be buried by our own guys anyway, won't it?"

They both cast themselves into the swamp as a shell swooped at them. It burst just beyond where they lay, and after the iron had stopped falling, Bones wiped the water from his face and poked up his head to see if he could see any sign of where the shell had landed. He figured from the sound it ought to have made a crater about twenty feet wide. He could see no sign of it, however, and turned to see if Joe was unhurt. The latter put a clammy hand in a wet sleeve against Bones' cheek.

"I wish them artillerymen wasn't so —— accurate," said Bones. "I'd like to have some o' them doughboys here that says we can't shoot. Why man, they're puttin' 'em all in the same hole!"

"Well, let's move a little farther away from it," suggested Joe.

"No, we better stay where we are," objected Bones, "because there's boche here an' we don't want to run into 'em."

"Is it gettin' daylight, or isn't it?" interrupted Joe.

There was no doubting that it was getting lighter. The side of the causeway, the green grass at its top, the bushes of the marsh, and the straggly posts that held the wire were discernible. Day was coming, objects would be visible, the color of a man's uniform distinguishable, and the boche that were in that marsh would be very unpleasant neighbors. The light continued to grow, and the bombardment seemed to keep pace with it.

There was a sudden stronger note in the storm that beat about the marsh, some new instrument had begun to play in that gigantic orchestra. The shells thundered, there was a continuous drumming like the rolling of empty barrels on a cobbled street, but this new sound rose above all the others, dominating them, almost extinguishing them. It was like the continuous sound of many birds chirping, the grinding of a thousand automobile gears, the clattering of hundreds of wooden shoes over stones. The Americans had jumped off, and everything in sight had opened up on them. The Americans on their side replied, machine-guns fired over the advance, one-pounders barked, Stokes mortars coughed, and tanks clattered through the mud and water. It seemed as if every ounce of energy in the American Army was concentrated on the effort to break through the line at this point, and that the enemy were making equal exertions to hold their positions.

The advantage, however, was with the Americans, for they were fresh troops, while the Germans were the same ones that

had sustained the initial shock of the drive three days before. These men had been told by their superiors that the Americans would not enter the war, that if they did, they could not send over any appreciable reinforcements, and that what troops they did send would be worthless. Here, then, were the Americans. They had poured into the sector in a solid flood. There was no stopping them. Checked at one point, they broke through down the line, the attacking forces used up a division a day, and broke through by sheer force of numbers. On their part, the Germans had been reinforced once only and then by a very weak reserve battalion. Their nerve was being broken, first, by their loss of confidence in their superiors, and second, by the unheard-of fierceness and tenacity with which these supposed worthless Americans fought.

This dike or causeway behind which Bones and Joe were lying was a strong point in the German defense system and this being known to the Americans, they expended considerable energy and time on reducing it. Bones and Joe had their heads in the mud perpetually. Joe, at the point where he was ready to stand up, to have the agony over with at once, felt a hard object bump against his head.

His first thought was that Bones had kicked him, and looking up to protest, he discovered a hobnailed shoe about four inches from his nose. This shoe was not of American manufacture. The American shoes had no protection for the heel but a steel ring and the heel of this one was studded with hobnails. The shoe stood straight up and down, as though its owner lay on his face. Where was his other foot? Joe looked to see if Bones had seen. Evidently he had, for his eyes were riveted on the shoe. The two men began with mutual consent to crawl backward into the mud, moving slowly and as silently as they could, though in all that clamor if they had been crawling on sheets of tin they would not have been heard. Eventually they came together.

"What's that?" husked Bones, pointing to the shoe.

"Boche," whispered Joe.

There was a boche there lying upon his face, waiting for some one. Suppose he should turn around? Bones, who had been looking about for a hiding place, threw his face into the mud with such a jerk that Joe thought he had been hit.

"Where'd it get yuh, Bones?" he cried, forgetting all caution.

"Aw, yuh —— fool, looka the German army!" Joe promptly joined his comrade in the mud. A machine-gun crew, hurrying to oppose the American advance, was splashing through the water not ten yards away. They had intentions of setting up their gun on the side of the causeway and firing over it. The two Americans began to crawl forward again. What hope for them, between two parties of the enemy, shelled by their own troops and prevented from flight by the causeway on one side and the wire-threaded marsh on the other? However, while there was life there was hope, and the Americans were advancing on the other side of the causeway.

Suddenly, as frequently happens, there was a distinct hush. No shell burst, no guns fired, no sound but faint yelling. At this instant Bones, who had been fighting it for some time, was seized with a fit of coughing. The silence did not last above three seconds, but that racking cough seemed to reach the heavens with its clamor before the renewed clatter of machine-guns extinguished the sound. Joe first thought of gas and put on his mask, It was impossible to breathe through it, the intake was probably full of mud, and he removed it, to behold the stern faces of two Germans gazing at him.

"At 'em, Joe," howled Bones, and the two Americans rose and leaped at the Germans. Joe had some idea of shooting them, but mud and water affect German automatics as well as other makes, and after one shot the pistol would not function. The two Yanks charged over the little hillock of muddy ground. On the other side they saw a German machine-gun, seven members of its crew, and several men asleep or dead. The Germans, on their side, saw two terrible figures, their garments in rags, their white faces daubed and streaked with mud, and their teeth skinned in a grin of basic savagery. With a shock of horror the gun crew saw Joe shoot their comrade. So! The Americans had broken through. The gun crew put up their hands.

Bones grasped the situation first.

"Quick, Joe!" he cried, though he was seized by another spasm of coughing, "they surrendered. Frisk 'em!"

"Leave it to me," cried Joe. "Divvies

afterward! Oh, kid! You with the nice Gott Mit Uns buckle! Come to papa!"

The Germans were disarmed before they realized that things were not as they appeared. It did not take them long, however, to see how matters stood. They could see no other Americans save these two. They themselves were six, and began a rapid-fire exchange of comments in German.

"On your way!" cried Joe to the Germans. "The first one that bats an eye gets a sunbeam through him."

The Germans did not move, but turned angrily upon the Yanks. Joe shot one to show he meant what he said. He had another pistol now, that some German kept carefully dry all night. The remainder leaped upon the two Americans.

Across the swamp the commotion was noticed by another gun crew. They saw the olive drab uniforms, the struggling knot of men, and believing that the Americans had gotten in, shifted their gun from its former target to the twisting group at the foot of the causeway. Bones was on his back with two Germans on top of him, and so was safe. Joe was just going down and the Germans that bore him to earth protected him, receiving in their own bodies the bullets from the machine gun. Joe, again free, promptly picked up another pistol, shot one of the men on top of Bones, and fired a few shots after the other, who fled into the marsh where the smoke of a shell-burst blotted him from sight.

"YOU all right, Bones?" he inquired. Another burst from the gun showered him with mud, so he flung himself down beside Bones.

"I'm all right," gasped Bones. "They was too eager to put me away to use any science about it. I had one guy's thumb in my mouth an' if you hadn't come along, he'd been minus one of his lunch hooks, I ain't kiddin' yuh!"

"Can you run one o' these guns?" cried Joe, pointing to the machine-gun that lay on its side. "Boy, they sure done a good job by killin' that bunch for me. It's a wonder they didn't kill me, too. Them bullets'll go right through a man."

"Git the gun goin'," cried Bones. "Git the gun workin'. They'll be in here, —— for breakfast now!"

"Git the gun goin'!" cried Joe. "I ain't a machine-gunner! The —— thing ain't even loaded!"

"Put the belt in, I know how it goes," said Bones. He attempted to insert the belt, but the German gun feeds from the right, and not the left, as the French gun does. Bones at one time had been a member of the battery machine-gun detail, but his instruction had never gone beyond the proper way to carry a box of ammunition. His language was heroic.

"Try it the other side!" suggested Joe. "Yuh better hurry. There's neighbors comin' to call."

"To —— with it!" said Bones. He seized one of the stick grenades that lay about, and giving it an agonized glance, began to unscrew the cap.

"Thank God I know how to fix one o' these!" he cried. He jerked out the string, stood up, said, "Spit spat spy, hit him in the eye," and threw the grenade into the midst of a party of Germans who were coming to investigate the fight they had seen, and were not five yards away. *Bang!* went the grenade in the very center of the group, even before it hit the ground. A piece of it clipped a small morsel from Joe's ear, who, after giving a startled yelp, went back to his examination of the machine-gun.

Joe had inserted the belt, but he did not know what to do next. He had an idea that a lever had to be pulled, or a wheel turned, or something done, so he pulled everything he saw, turned every wheel, and continued to press the trigger. The gun was one of the light type, and Joe had rested its muzzle on the little hillock behind which he and Bones spent the night.

"Gimme another grenade," said Bones. "I see a gun."

Joe looked around, and at that moment the gun began to fire. Immediately all his attention was concentrated upon his gun. It shook and jumped and leaped under his hands as if it were a snake that he was trying to hold. He could see the heads of a gun crew just beyond, all looking his way. They seemed to be waiting very patiently for him to get his bullets among them. Suddenly the heads went down, but not because Joe had hit them. His bullets were all sailing into the unprotesting sky. The Germans had ducked because a tank was going by on the far side of the swamp. The tank was on the job, however, for a one-pounder shell sailed their way, and Joe saw

them no more. Joe continued to fire. He had the bright thought that he could depress the muzzle until he saw mud fly, and thus he would have some idea of where his bullets were going. The gun hammered his shoulder unmercifully, but he got the muzzle down, and could see bushes waving and water leaping where the bullets were going. On general principles he swept back and forth through the marsh, then along the dike, and then back into the marsh again. The tank that had passed was followed by some scattered groups of men.

"Look! look!" yelled Bones. "Lay off that shootin'! Those are our guys over there!"

Sure enough, dimly seen, but still distinguishable, were some Americans. They were beginning to leak through. A German machine-gunner can fire at only one target at a time. Too many upsets him. The diversion created by the capture of the gun that Joe was firing was too much for the gunners in the neighborhood. They had stopped to see what was going on, and to see if the enemy had gotten in, one or two had shifted their aim even, and while all this confusion reigned, the Americans had rushed forward and crossed a particularly bad stretch of ground in front of the causeway. The whole detachment of Germans began to lose their nerve.

The crew had surrendered in the first place to Bones and Joe because of lowered morale. In their own minds they gave the Americans superhuman qualities. The Germans were sleepless, hungry, and afraid. They began to stand up and surrender. The Americans on the other side of the causeway, discovering that hostile fire had ceased for the most part, rushed forward. There was wire to be crossed, however, but it was for the most part flattened and uprooted by the artillery. The Americans got through, crossed the causeway, and began to mop up the marsh. Then their commander began to make his dispositions for the assault of the next position, the village by the bridge, where Joe and Bones had first met the machine-gunners.

"Well, I guess we been rescued," remarked Joe, as American helmets appeared on all sides. "Now I'm goin' to see who that guy was that kicked me in the head." He stood up and walked a few steps. "Lookit, Bones," he cried, "that guy was a stiff. They was shovin' him outta the nest, an' they shoved his foot up against my skull! He musta been killed by the big shell we heard in the night."

"Why d'yuh suppose they didn't hear us talkin'?" pondered Bones.

"Maybe the machine-gunners didn't come in till daylight, an' these other birds was creepin' up to spike us with a trench knife an' the shell lay down on 'em. Then when the gunners come in, they just shoved the stiffs out the way. Ain't it ——! I lost them officers' field-glasses in the mud somewhere."

"Well, let's get outta here," said Bones, his frame again racked by the coughing. "I caught my never-get-over layin' around in this swamp."

"Let's go," said Joe. "The war's over. Only just wait a sec till I gather some o' these sheaves." Then he began to pick up belts, pistols, and odds and ends of German equipment.

The two clambered on the causeway, jumped down the other side, and wandered down a lane in the wire, between groups of prisoners and stretcher bearers bringing out wounded. They came to a road, where machine-gunners were unloading their weapons from carts. Past the machine-gunners they went and here Bones sat down and coughed again.

"Joe," he remarked, "I'm a sick woman. I can't walk another step."

Joe looked hastily around, and seeing a man with a Red Cross brassard on his arm, he called to him.

"Hey, guy," said Joe, "hang your eye on my buddy here, I think he's gassed."

"He ain't gassed, I don't think," said the Red Cross man, laying a professional hand on Bones' muddy forehead, "but I'll give him a ticket. I'll bet he's got pneumonia. You birds ought to have sense enough to wear slickers this weather."

He wrote a ticket and affixed it to Bones' blouse.

"There'll be some ambulances along in a while. The dressin' station is down the road about a coupla minutes' walk. Think yuh can make it?"

At the dressing station, a shattered cottage already overflowing with wounded, Bones was told to sit upon a box and await the ambulance. He and Joe shook hands.

"I never was cut out to be a soldier," said Bones. "It ain't my line. I been the jinx

o' this party since it began. Didn't I go an' think up that bright thought to be an M. P.? 'How was you wounded?' people will say. 'I wasn't wounded; I got a cold.' 'How do you kill your dead'? says they. 'I fall on 'em outta a hay-loft'."

Joe shifted his weight from one foot to the other, and thought of something comforting to say. He felt rather weak himself and he would willingly have sat upon the box with Bones, but the attendants seemed to be inhospitable. An officer approached down the road, and after looking fixedly at Joe, crossed the road toward him.

"Here comes hard luck," muttered Joe. "I can see it in that guy's eye."

"Are you hit?" said this officer, who wore the insignia of a doctor.

"No, sir," said Joe. "I ain't hit, I was just talkin' to my friend here."

"Where's all that blood come from?"

"How come?" asked Joe, trying to look at the back of his leg, in the manner of him to whom it is said, "You've been sitting in something."

There was a great splotch of blood all down Joe's thigh, as far as his puttees, where it mingled with mud and water.

"Oh, that?" said Joe, "I don't know what it is. It must have come off the Jerries I was fightin' with."

"Let's have a look," said the doctor. He proceeded to cut Joe's breeches, and grunting satisfaction, called to an attendant to bring bandages and iodine. "You've got a piece of tin in your leg," said the doctor to Joe.

"How come I didn't feel it?" asked Joe in surprize.

"Search me," said the doctor. "It's in the muscle, maybe. It's in there, all right."

"Well, that's what I call nice," said Joe, "now me an' my buddy can go to hospital together."

He winked at Bones as if to say—

"An' no explainin' to do about bein' A. W. O. L."

"Just give us this junk," said the doctor, "and we'll fix you up a stretcher and give you a little A. T. S."

"That ain't junk," protested Joe. "Them's my souvenirs."

"You can't carry all that back to hospital," laughed the doctor; "you'd need a truck."

"You gotta turn 'em in, anyway," said the orderly, swabbing iodine on Joe's wound. "It's orders. 'All allied an' enemy property to be turned in to the salvage officer.' They took a swell Luger off me day before yesterday."

"That's right," said the doctor, "take 'em off."

"Ain't war ——!" said Joe with feeling. "Why, me an' my buddy got captured an' escaped an' killed a young regiment o' krauts, an' all so's we could turn in our souvenirs to the salvage officer!"

He thereupon sadly laid down the light machine-gun, a box of ammunition, eight pistols complete with belts, four helmets, two knapsacks, and a bayonet, complete with tassel.

They injected him with anti-tetanus serum.

"——!" remarked Joe, "I don't know but what I'd rather been killed."

Then the orderly and the doctor withdrew.

"Bones," said Joe painfully, "they didn't get everything. I still got that officer's shoulder-straps. I'm glad I lost his field-glasses; it'd broke my heart to give 'em up."

He searched his overcoat again.

"An' that ain't all, Bones! I got one of them canteens like you was always lookin' for. It's got stuff in it."

He and Bones both drank, and Bones had a fit of coughing not due to his pneumonia. Two stretchers were brought and the men lay thankfully down upon them. When they were alone the German canteen circulated again.

"Boy," said Bones, "there's only one thing lackin' to make this perfect. I wish I had my tin hat."

"How come your tin hat?" asked Joe. "You 'fraid o' catchin' cold in your head?"

"Nope," said Bones, "but I had a butt in the linin' of it."

UNDER the FLEET

by Charles Tenney Jackson

Author of "Red Bone," "The Watch on the Wine," etc.

THE far-off cry of the hound came for the second time to Tommy Dever's ears. This was odd that Ott Means, the levee idler, gamester of the rat-eyed river towns, had his thin face turned in the starlight as if listening acutely. Tommy, in the stern of his skiff, whose bow Ott held against the batture mud at the upper end of a weed-grown raft moored by rotting lines to the Mississippi bank, saw the small-towner staring at the dead hulks of the cypress over the levee on the cut-over swamp.

"Listen!" murmured Tommy. "That's Jeffry's dog runnin' a man trail. That famous old Pal. He's got a funny holler. But I heard he was blind and retired from the county pack. Heard he'd never take the deep swamp again on a run-out."

"Yeh." Ott stared over the dried grass on the levee top rustling in the cross wind which brought a little run of waves lapping on the logs of the engineers' long-abandoned raft. "Blind. I seen him myself. He don't run with the pack. Butsy is lead-dog now. Pal can't hardly see to find his grub pan when the trusties set it by the wires at Jeffry's. Yeh—blind."

The night was very still. The chorus of frogs in the scummy pools beyond the levee would arise, and then die as if they, too, were listening, waiting for something of peril to come.

Ott, the towner, had asked Tommy Dever to drop down here below Daymark Four to ferry a traveling man across to where he might catch a Valley train. Tommy might earn an easy dollar as he was going to row over, anyhow, on his way to Deneau's plantation store.

"Yeh can take him over and put him up at the commissary for the night, Tommy," Ott had suggested. "He missed the ferry at Saul's Landin'. He'll meet us here now, any minute."

That had been queer also—a drummer hoofing up the levee from Saul's to cross in the solitude of this west shore bend. Over the levee here nothing but the stark fallen cypress jungle and swamp pools for eight miles till one struck the Salier road, upon which Jeffry's contract prison chain-gang was working, under the gun, and where they were housed in the wire stockade of nights.

Yes, now Tommy Dever thought of it, the business was funny. Tommy, at twenty-one, lustily whistling about his job as commissary clerk at Deneau's plantation, had no illusions about Ott, the towner. He was just a levee rat, but Tommy would do any small favor such as this for a belated Memphis drummer.

"He'll have a hike, if he's luggin' sample-cases from Saul's," Tommy muttered, and nailed a mosquito on his ear. "He—"

Then he stopped. Ott's thin shoulders had turned. For the cry of the hound had come again. Mournful, patient, but husky—the voice of a tired old dog plodding the swamp pools, coming on with inexorable ceaseless faith to a trail's end.

"Blind — runnin' blind—" Tommy stopped again.

Ott was listening fascinatedly. The frogs had been booming—*gurr-u-u-mp—gurr-u-u-mp*—over in the cut-over, but now had stopped as if a master's baton had lifted to the symphony. They were so stilled that another sound came. The heavy shuffle of wet clothes, the slog of rough brogans, the splash and plunge of a man through the moss-clogged pools of the down timber.

And the patient cry of the hound came closer. Tommy Dever whirled to his feet in a sudden fierce understanding.

"A getaway man from Jeffry's! Ott, you tricked me—"

Then he knew, from the level thrust of Ott's arm, that he was facing a pistol across the thwarts. The towner's face was a whitish blur behind it.

"Sit down. Yeh— Crump's comin'. Sit back there, yeh!"

The last crash of a body in the weeds down the inner ramp of the levee, and then County Contract Prisoner No. 236, Danny Crump, on his last run-out from the camp hounds, loomed up on the topping. Tommy heard the suck of swamp ooze down the broad faded stripes of gray, and then the drip as Danny came down to the raft moorings. The getaway man saw Ott and the skiff.

He halted, snarling. That plaintive, husky howl of the county dog had come again. Old Pal, that follerin', fightin' fool. It was a joke of the prison barracks that Pal was the jinx of Danny Crump. Three times on a run-out this year, and three times treed by the pack with the weary old lead-dog patiently waiting for the shotgun guards to take him down.

Crump had sworn that the lead-dog haunted him, skulked about the barracks watching him stealthily; even half-blind this summer and retired from the pack, the bald, scarred old gray devil singled him out day and night in sinister menace.

So now he stood cursing in the mucky drip of his stripes.

"—— his grubby eyes, I'll do him. The young dogs went wide down toward Saul's. Only Pal—they said he'd never run again. Blind, they told me—all through. But he took me alone, Ott. The sneakin', skulkin' rat—three times now—only me—jest sneaked the wire and follered me"—

"Blind, they said," grunted Ott. "Well, hop in here."

"Blind? What eyes he need—a gray, limpin' devil comin' in the dark. I'll git him, Bo—I'll knock his old eyes pasty!"

"Get in. The river'll end his trailin'. Time the young hounds nose in here, and them shotgun men, you'll be faded."

"And him howlin' to mark where we crossed. But he ain't no miracle dog. Put him away before we drop down to Flexie's. The job'll take time, Ott."

Young Dever listened to this closely. Down across the big eddy near the east bank, moored to Towhead Nine, lay old Doc Flexner's showboat, the *Bayou Belle*—Tommy began to remember swiftly. This huge man in muddy stripes—yes, the job of last season came to Tommy's mind. Crump, the Cinncy dip, who had gone to the chain-gang on a charge of frisking a mussel-shell buyer who had been a patron of Flexner's vaudeville and picture show one night when the floating carnival was tied up at Saul's Landing.

Tommy had never seen the man, but he had heard. It was the testimony of Nellie Flexner, the yellow-haired and gray-eyed ticket-taker for her father's show, which had put Crump on the State roads. The shell-buyer had picked up half a dozen fresh-water pearls from some middle river clammer. Crump had frisked his wallet, but the pearls had then vanished, though the job put him in stripes. Nellie Flexner saw the gang working, and that was enough. A Cinncy dip working the river gets short shrift below Cairo, so Crump got his.

Tommy drew a swift breath as Crump snarled his hatred of the lone hound circling the swamp pools out there in the dark over the levee. He remembered, also, kindly old Doc Flexner's story of the famous trailing dog. Eleven years ago, on one of his annual winter trips on the lower river, Flexner had given a pup to his friend, the sheriff of Loreau County. A half-bred Walker and bloodhound from an up-river kennel, and in the years since, the fame of this dog had spread from the Sabine line to Southwest Pass. A swamp trailer, a nemesis of any prisoner who took to the deep cypress from any South Coast gang camp.

Old, now. Broken, now, they said, staggering with weakness on the sunny side of the cookhouse barrack at Jeffry's. That's what made Crump rage—it was the talk that Pal would never run again with the younger hounds. Butsy was lead-dog now

—but the gray gaunt hound had chosen Crump for his own to guard and harry, to menace with those dulled eyes as Danny slogged at the road rock.

"Git in," repeated Ott, the towner. "This guy'll take us to the Towhead. He won't squeal—tie him up till we get into the Yazoo, after we finish with Flexie—"

Crump was grumbling for a cigaret. When he struck the match, Tommy saw the two on the bank beyond the skiff bow. The thin flicker on Ott's hollowed cheeks and against Crump's broad bricky jowls with his slitted eyes above. Then Crump's bull-grunt of refusal as he listened toward the cypress.

ON THE other side, stretching from the weedy raft, was the vast suck and bubble of the Mississippi eddying into the eight-mile bend under the thin mists below the stars. Tommy thought once of sliding overboard n escape—he didn't like this talk concerning himself. But then there were old Doc Flexner and his daughter, likely as not alone tonight on the *Bayou Belle*, for the showboat would not open her season for a fortnight yet, lying in her lines below the Towhead waiting for the troupers who would report from St. Louis for the autumn run. Tommy had stopped at the showboat only yesterday when he crossed the river. The old man and his girl were alone then. Not even the deckmen had reported, and Doc had let the watchman take the week-end ashore.

So young Dever sat back in the stern. He would see this business through tonight if it concerned Nellie Flexner.

"—him and me. Hate, that's what it is. I'd been gone months ago out o' Jeffry's but that hound watchin' me. Jest me—after he treed me three times. Looky, Ott, a dog that Flexie give to Jeffry's years ago, and then, on account o' that job with Flexie, I git in stripes. Like as if stars said we was ha'nted, that hound and me. In the barracks there, now, seems like I seen him peerin' when I was tryin' to sleep. Yeh—and now, when I fooled the young dogs he sneaks me alone."

Ott swore at him scaredly. The getaway man was jerking at the split mooring stake which held the mat raft to the levee. He whirled a section of it aloft and stood waiting.

Ott tore a flashlight from his pocket and the blur of dim light swept the grassy levee topping. Crump was wringing the dirty water from his striped sleeves, then staring again at the cypress swamp.

"Wait—he'll come on. Blind, he'll come square on to us. Hear him, Ott? Swing that light—he won't know."

A hundred feet away the slow cadence of the hound's weariness. Crump cursed—his voice trembled oddly.

Tommy stood up. A vague, moving shape cleared the weeds. The cry of the hunter came again like a forecast of evil. Then they all saw him. The swamp hound jogged slowly into the blotch of wavering light, on a yard, and stopped. The bald, insect-bitten poll, the yellowed teeth, the rough ears pocked and torn with burrs, the gaunt shoulders scarred with years of service—old Pal was watching steadfastly at the trail's end.

And into this blur of light stole the huge shadow of the hunted man. The hound's red-rimmed and clouded eyes never changed as Crump swung his club. Only Tommy howled a warning.

Blind at last, maybe—utterly blind. Tommy Dever yelled again frantically and came plunging shoreward past Ott and his gun. He tripped over the raft moorings just as he heard the crash of the stick on the brute's skull. When Tommy charged into the convict, Crump was kicking and trampling Pal's weakened body into the mud.

"Stop it!" raged young Dever. "That's enough! You got him—a blind dog—I'll break your face!"

They were scuffling over the fallen hound, Crump surprized by the attack, and Ott howling for them to stop it.

"Dever, I'll bump yeh off! Git away, there—"

Crump was backing away, evilly laughing.

"This guy's off his nut. Tore into me over a dog. Fella', I got him right—"

Tommy was lifting the hound's bloody head. The flashlight showed the dull eyes blurring. Crump thrust a huge hand forth, seized the body and hurled it to the river. They all heard the smash of it on the weedy raft in the darkness.

"Come on, you!" blustered Ott. "Them gun guards'll have the pack along before mornin'. Dever, you git in the stern. Watch him, Danny. I'll pull the oars. Take the light, Danny."

He swung the pistol on Tommy, and Tommy stumbled to the boat. Crump followed, still boasting of his deed. The skiff was ten yards out in the star-blurring mist when the convict shot the light back toward the raft. He spoke suddenly:

"Did you hear nothin'? I—well, I smashed his head in, didn't I? You seen me, Ott, didn't you?"

"Yeh. Dead and drowned—"

Ott was rowing athwart the heavy current. Crump resumed his boasting. In three years, now, no man had made a getaway from Jeffry's camp. Jeffry's, where they used the two-inch cat and worked hard eggs in double shackles. But he, Danny Crump, had done it. Made a clean runout from the stockade and got to the river. Let the young dogs nose and circle the pools and downfalls—Danny had made a getaway.

No man had ever done that when the famous Pal was lead-dog to the pack. No man save Danny Crump. Well, it took a slick one from Cinncy to show up these hick deputies and chain-gang bosses. And greater still, Danny had made a finish of Pal, the fightin', follerin' fool. It was good—even the bloody club and the dead dog thrown off the bank. Yes, the shotgun men at Jeffry's would remember this slick one from up-river!

Ott listened uneasily to the boasting. Ott lived on the river. The towner would have to turn real crook after this.

The skiff slipped into the misty midstream and silence of the river night. Tommy Dever heard a whispered conference. The Cinncy dip had asked who was this lad that fought for Jeffry's dog. Ott muttered back apologetically:

"Mebbe we can use him. Least he can't hurt. Tie him up, mebbe, in the woods. Nobody'd find him till we was up the Yazoo. Keep still, man! There's the *Belle's* ridin' light."

The bulk of the old showboat grew out of the mist. Ott laid the skiff along her waist, where Danny eased it soundlessly to the paddlebox bracings. Tommy was studying what he should attempt against this raid, when Ott jammed the automatic muzzle into his back. They motioned him to board the *Bayou Belle.*

"Lower that ridin' light off the jack," whispered Danny.

Ott did this while Danny held the gun on Tommy Dever. Then the huge convict stole forward under the cabin deck.

"Danny's job," Ott muttered. "I keep the gun on you, see? Danny knows where the clammer's pearls is. He hid 'em the night the constable grabbed him. Nobody knows but Danny. Now, you, Dever, you squeal and you git bumped off and to the river."

"Look here," grunted Tommy. "Flexie's girl is with him. She—he ain't goin' to hurt her, now—"

"Danny ain't goin' to hurt nobody. Just feel out where he hid that clammer's leather. He can go put his hand on it."

Tommy growled at Ott. The towner was shaking nervously. This was new stuff for him under the Cinncy crook's tutelage.

"All right," muttered Dever. "Get it, but don't put hand on her. I'll start —— poppin' if he does anything—"

"Keep shut—listen?"

They heard something. Perhaps it was the scuff of Crump's shoes on the main deck where the gay scrollwork of the faded marquee overhung the broad main stairway. The two by the dark cavern of the coal bunkers and engine-room below could see the landing-stage swinging in the slight lift of the steamboat on the river's surge. But that something they had heard—well, Ott was staring out to the river, listening, his thin face to one side.

THEN they did hear a sound above. Tommy started abruptly. Doc's living cabin and Nellie Flexner's berth room were aft of the main showboat cabin. There was a cross passage between. Tommy wondered where Crump could have hidden the freshwater pearls that night he was pinched in the act? It could not have been in Nellie Flexner's room. There was no need of molesting her. And the old man might easily sleep through this second robbery on his boat.

Old Flexie was honest. He would permit no gang to operate on the *Bayou Belle.* Tawdry and faded her carnival banners on stanchion and jackstaff, losing money year by year against the smart new picture houses of the river towns and the radio, she still kept in the down-river run by the old showman.

There were forlorn mill towns where the children ran from school when they heard the *Belle's* wheezy calliope.

There were stark unpainted swampers' hamlets down the Atchafalaya where the grimy pennants and the grease-piant cheapness of the comedians were the glory of the world to shy people who never got out of the flooded forests. But only last week Nellie had told Tommy Dever they would have to quit the river next season. It was a loser's game now. And Tommy had hoped—well, he had almost asked Nellie Flexner if she would not quit it for a cottage bowered in Cherokee roses on the Deneau plantation. He would not always be a commissary clerk for the sugar land tenantry of Deneau's.

He had almost asked her—not quite. But he would before the *Bayou Belle* swung away from her berth at the towhead. Nellie, with that amazing yellow bobbed hair and laughter and helpfulness to old Doc Flexner in his declining fortunes. Tie to a girl who smiles as luck slips past her white fingers and she comforts an old man's tradition of lost glory on the river.

Tommy was thinking of her as he watched the gun in Ott's hand. He hated to be in this, but now he was glad he had come. Whatever they did to him, he was near her if need came.

They were standing so, under the deck with the dim curls of mist streaming past, when another sound came. Not much. A soft crunch. A sort of fall, perhaps. Ott whispered—the towner's nerves were cracking. He stood it a moment and then motioned with the gun.

"Git on up. I—we—got to see—he said he wouldn't kill nobody. When I promised to help him out, he said it."

Tommy went before him up the main companion, then aft past the long cabin with its curtained windows, to the cross-passage. Crump had the flashlight turned on the floor of the showman's living room aft of this. Water still dripped from his faded stripes as he tossed a blackjack to a tumbled berth.

The body of the old showman was crumpled on the rug before his reading desk. Tommy had taken one swift step forward when Ott swung before him with the gun. The towner's white lips were inarticulate. Danny Crump stole to them at the passage door. He whispered satisfiedly:

"He was readin' a book. Never knew I come in. Slid off his chair when I tapped him. Yeh—like a dog." He watched Tommy covertly. Then a leer at Ott. "Come on, you guys—didn't you ever see a job rapped off before?"

Dever's eyes were fixed on the door of Nellie Flexner's room. He fancied he could hear her breathing. Ott stared at the man on the rug.

"Croaked?" he said dully.

"I dunno. Laid away. Now, git that wreckin' bar and git forward in the main passage. I slid the clammer's stuff down behind a loose panel that night they grabbed me. They thought I chucked it over the rail. If it's gone somebody's goin' to come through and tell me where it is."

He glanced at Nellie's closed door. The young man from Deneau's plantation caught his eye. Crump laughed slowly. Then Ott motioned Tommy with the gun. The three went forward around the main cabin. There, in the vestibule, under the faded gilt wood of the old marquee, Crump felt along the panels, inspected each covertly, and then drove his iron bar softly into a crack behind the hand-rail. The pop of the first rusty nail made him stop and listen. Then he growled suspiciously:

"Ott, you take this fella aft. If Flexie's girl hears me and comes out, give this fella the gun. Gun her, too, if she starts anything. The old man is done in good. But watch 'em."

Ott hesitated, then gave way before the other's will. Tommy went aft before his guard. In the dark along the rail, the two heard the stealthy crack of the frail wood panels as Crump loosened them to get down to the joists where the leather that held the five pearls must have dropped that night as the dip tried to edge away from his victim who squealed to the crowd.

Tommy was breathing easier. If only Nellie would not hear this; if only the two got the plunder and made off over the east bank! Tommy did not believe that old Doc Flexner was killed. The thing to do was to pretend assent, go along with the raiders ashore, and then escape at the first chance and come back to the showboat to aid old Doc and the girl Tommy loved.

Tommy was staring over to the mist-drift when Crump came back. He whispered to Ott, a snarling brief command, and then went back to his job.

"Git down below," ordered Ott. "Easy, now—down to her forward lines."

Once there in the dark about the piled

cordage of the fore landing-deck, Tommy demanded what this meant.

"Throw her headlines off. We're goin' to river-drift her a ways. Let her ride and git over the bank. You hear?"

"Say—" Tommy retorted. "What you mean? She'll draw out of the big eddy and blunder on miles—dark. Pile herself on a towhead, or—"

"Let her ride," seethed Ott. "Git that line off!"

Tommy heaved on the wet hawser. His mind was working swiftly again. Perhaps this would be better. But then he would have to break with the two before he left the *Belle*. He would not have a senseless man and a sleeping girl drifting in the dark. The mystery of the river has taken toll of drifters.

Ceaselessly he watched Ott's gun. If only the cowardly towner was not so cautious about it, keeping this sinewy young man always before the muzzle and six feet away. And if anything happened to Tommy, and Nellie Flexner awakened terrorized by a shot, there was no telling what her fate would be. So Tommy dragged the shoreline in. He groped aft on the runway past the boiler-room, and dropped the stern mooring.

Ott backed away from him once more, and they looked at the blur of the mist with the water curling away beneath. It seemed as if the old *Bayou Belle* were slipping on, clutched in the out-turn of the five-mile eddy off this shore.

Then Crump came down the main companion. He was cursing with a slow implacable fury. He hurled the wrecking bar with a clatter into an empty coal bunker, and snapped the flashlight full on Ott's yellow face.

"I tore the sheathin' off clean to the floor. All along I ripped it. The stuff ain't there. It ought to be behind that wall. —— you, Ott, did you ever hear of anybody gittin' that stuff back again?"

"No, I never did," Ott quavered. "Lest old Flexie did. The boat's been on the upper river a year since the job. Mebbe Doc did. Or some o' the deckhands. Or somebody—"

Crump exploded at him with curses that leaped and burned.

"Yeh said it was all set, this job! I took the run-out from Jeffry's because the *Belle* was lyin' close here. You lie!"

"What I lie for?" Ott was paling in the wavering light. "Git the girl, then. If Doc's gone, make her say what happened to the leather. Make her talk, Danny."

"I tried to. I went in and gagged her. Tied her up and tried to sweat it out o' her. Say, you!" He whirled about.

"Stop there, Dever!" yelled Ott, and shook the gun.

"What'd you do to her?" snarled Tommy Dever.

"Nothin'. Not yet. She's safe and silent. Tied to a chair. Fella, you stick here, see?"

He grumbled on to Ott in another conference aside. The pistol was between Tommy and the stairway, so he merely watched out to the river mist. The old *Belle* was drifting now. Out toward the main flood, lightless, blundering on between the levees. Tommy listened for some sound above but nothing came in the utter silence. Then he could hear Crump's surly order.

"Now, mebbe, the old —— is bumped off right. I didn't hardly figure to make this the big job. Now, this is takin' too much time—if Flexie's croaked. We got to make over the bank and catch a Yazoo freight up. Git down under the boiler-room floor and open her cocks. Let her flicker."

Ott's breath came as if some one had taken fingers off his throat—

"Let 'em go—the two of 'em on her?"

"She's tied up. He's done in. Yeh got to cover the job."

They were both looking at Tommy Dever with sudden new interest. Tommy heard the bump of his skiff alongside just forward of the paddlebox on the left. Apart from the heavy lifeboats in their falls above, there was no other escape from the drifting packet. Ott was guessing Tommy's mind.

"Yeh go first in that boat when we goes, Dever. Mind yer step now. The gun's behind yeh, Dever. Crump, yeh say we quit her now? Open her up and sink her? Well, mebbe—"

"Yeh scared o' this job? Come on. Bring that fella. I'll rummage in the crew room for some clo'es, and then we take the left woods. This job is bad on top the water."

TOMMY was going before the two aft to the cavernous blackness of the boiler-rooms and coal bunkers with that confused alertness of mind tingling him to action. Whatever this would be it must come now. A

sudden ruse, a desperate blow in the dark, an escape that he might live to aid the girl that Crump had bound in her cabin.

Tommy was getting cold about it. Surely they would not permit him to live and tell this story. They were too matter-of-fact in dealing with him. No, either here on the hapless drifter, or over in the Mississippi bottom woods, Crump would put him away where he could never say what happened this night on the *Bayou Belle.*

Miles down there amidstream the *Belle* would plop under the sucking eddies, merely another mystery of the black river. With the living and the dead she would roll under a hundred feet of yellow water in tommorrow's sun.

The three had reached the iron hatch-cover in the coal space before the boilers, when Crump stopped abruptly.

"Listen? Did you— What was that?"

And the three were standing so, in the dark, when out of this, somewhere, came the long howl of a siren. A hoarse, far blast of steam that choked and throbbed downstream, and died to silence. Tommy heard Ott gasp, and then Crump blurted on in an odd relief:

"Pittsburgher. Comin up—pushin' a fleet o' empties. She'll be hoggin' the channel. We got to pull off here, now. This tub swinging lightless before them scows. See?"

Then Danny stopped again. For another sound had come. It was as if in answer to the throaty challenge of the tow-steamer down in the bend. A long, melancholy wail nearing on the wind.

The howl of a hound, husky, vibrant, patient, echoing from the wall of fog, filling all the dead empty engine-room space of the drifting packet. Near it seemed, but without direction, a lonely trumpet of sinister warning. Then silence. So still that Tommy heard the lap of water over the side, and the gulp of fright-stiffening muscles in Ott's throat.

No one spoke at first. When Ott did it was as if he were trying to find a voice which would not be summoned:

"It—it came from the cabin."

"It was out in the fog." Crump was staring there.

"I tell yeh, like it was on this boat. Old Pal's holler— Once he was Flexie's dog—years ago. I tell yeh, it was that hound o' Jeffry's—"

"I killed him," grunted Danny, staring. "Stomped his head. Yeh seen me, didn't yeh? Don't be a —— fool, Ott."

"Killed him then. But he hollered out there. A dead hound doggin' yeh down, Crump. Turn—that—flash—on!"

Ott's voice died to a thin whisper. Big Crump snapped the flashlight on. It made a wavering blur of the drifting fog. Crump's bluster seemed to set back into his throat from this white wall. He strove to give a sullen fullness of courage.

"In the mud I stomped him. I beat his brain flat. The last I seen his eyes was green-like—dead—"

"I told you not to kill a blind dog," muttered Tommy.

Tommy felt the hair flickering on his neck. The thing was real as the fear of death in a man's secret soul.

Crump turned viciously on them.

"It ain't a dog. You two poor saps—scared. Where did you think it was, Ott?"

"From up in the cabin. You killed old Doc Flexner. He give that pup to Jeffry years ago. Now, that old hound come back—come back to Flexie on the river."

Crump bawled furiously at him.

"A dead hound, ——! We left him miles back up the west shore. Stomped and drowned."

They had forgotten everything else. Even when Tommy Dever stepped to the side, Ott merely stood with the gun in his hand vacuously shaking it. Tommy called gruffly to them.

"Look here. That Pittsburgher comin' up. Pushin' five acres of coal empties, and you know how they ride the channel. Now, a Pittsburgher wouldn't swing a point for nothin'. This outfit will go under the fleet."

Crump stirred slowly. It was a sinister phrase down-river. The Pittsburgh coal captains, up-bound, were lords of the channel. A mighty front of iron-bound scows grunting and hogging in their chains, riding high and hard. An evil legend of shantyboat folk, drifters in the dark. No, the Pittsburghers didn't give a ——. They rode the drifter down and pretended not to know—and crawled on two thousand miles questioned by no one, for none lived to question.

"Under the fleet," Tommy repeated. "We ought to get a ridin' light out. We're drawin' across the big eddy."

For a moment he had almost forgotten. These two dumb men seemed comrades in distress. Danny Crump had taken a step forward, when the hoarse shout of the tow steamer smote the fog-filled air. The blare of it had not died out of their ears before they heard the hound again.

A long howl. Patient and weary, growing to a crescendo, as if gathering last strength, and then dying to a moan.

Crump spoke thickly.

"It ain't a dog—not a live dog. Not that Pal. I killed him, I tell you. And he was wore out from trailin'—wore out and blind. Only yesterday I see him at the camp—his eyes bulged green-like. He staggered, that weak he was. And now dead, I tell you—dead!"

"The best hound in the pack couldn't swim the eddy. It draws bad below Saul's—sucks and blubbers down."

Ott's voice was querulous as he followed Tommy. Crump stood a moment in the coal-room darkness and then also came out to them. The flashlight made no more than a blur on the fog. The towner's voice was flat with his complaints.

"It was me said not to kill that hound, him blind that way. An old wore-out dog starin' blind, dead in his tracks. Tired, that's what. Just now he sounded tired. A tired dog creepin' on yeh—"

"F'r ——'s sake," snarled big Danny, "don't tell me! A dog don't foller dead. Now, this, it was like Pal's holler—"

And then it came again. Close, booming right out of the drifty air. Crump was holding the flash straight out to the fog, and the howl seemed leaping in menace toward his hand.

The two ran back. Tommy faltered a moment. He started to deride this panic, and again the hoarse siren roared in the night. Ott, the towner, stumbled forward yelling.

"Look there, now—green! I saw green like eyes—"

"Aw, it's her side light. I see 'em," muttered Dever.

They all saw them now. First a faint, green, moving light. Then a fainter, red one. And then, far and fainter still, but steady as the throb of drums, came the beat of the steamer's paddles. Big Crump began to shout as if a clamp had relaxed from his throat.

"Yeh—a Pittsburgher! Like a mob o' scared kids we was! Jest a steamboat comin'! Why, I knowed it never was no dog. Never was a dog howlin' amidstream in the Mississip'."

He and Ott were whooping in sweaty relief. Well, it was good to have that towboat bearing on in the fog. Something real, something to feel, and see that was iron and living men.

"Look here, now!" cried Ott. "Look here, now. We got to do something. You know them for'ard scow mates—a drifter gits rolled under the fleet and they swear they never saw nothin'. We're no more than a shantyboat with no lights. She'll ride us as if we was a rotten egg."

Crump's wet stripes scuffed Tommy's arm. He pointed again.

"There's her searchlight. She picked up the *Belle's* stack, mebbe. She sees us—mebbe. Now, a steamboat yeh can understand. She'll pass us to port mebbe—"

The towner yelled insanely at him: "Pass, ——! Look at the two lights of her—"

"Yes," said Tommy Dever slowly, "We're driftin' full on her scows. She won't swing a point. She—" He blinked at the blotch of opaque light which was the steamer's eye. The Pittsburgher must suspect a drifter in the channel. Her mighty whistle spoke again, warning, menace, wrath at this thing ahead.

And then, as a diminishing echo, came the dog's howl. It was farther away now. It arose to mournful cadence and died tiredly with the steady throb of the steamer's paddles.

"Like that," said Crump wearily. "Her paddles chunkin' like something we know, and then a dead dog hollers. Ott—"

Tommy dashed for the companion stairs. He heard the last gabble of the two as he made the turn. Ott's thin voice shaking.

"Blind and stomped—but leadin' us under the fleet. I told yeh, Danny. A fleet don't stop f'r the wrath o' God!"

Tommy crashed into the door of Doc Flexer's cabin. He yelled as he crossed it to Nellie's room. Dark there, and he went staggering from berth to chair, until he got hands upon the bound girl. Then the searchlight's beam smote in the window.

By this he saw to tear Crump's clumsy cloth gag from her mouth. Nellie Flexner writhed fiercely as Tommy stripped the cords from her elbows and ankles.

"Dad!" she cried. "Where is Dad? Who got him? Tommy—you!"

"Get out. The *Belle's* going under the fleet. Nell, where is Doc? Where, Nell?"

She had dashed for the cabin. There, by the dim light, they saw a man crawling aimlessly about on hands and knees. Tommy had missed him in the dark. Now the girl and boy raised the showman to his feet, dragged him on out and forward along the rail. The searchlight had shot from the drifter to some shoremark, was holding there with sullen indifference to this unknown shape ahead in the night.

Tommy was babbling in a frenzy—life-preservers, a raft, even a boat—what good, any of them before the high-riding prows of a coal fleet?

Old Doc Flexner was dragged on, weakly protesting, his brain not cleared. They reeled down the stairs. Tommy shouted to the men back under the deck. He saw them struggling about the tie-rope of his skiff. That was the hope. In a skiff one might row mightily, sensing the direction of the fleet and pass it by sheerest chance. Tommy would plead with Danny and Ott. If they would take Nellie and Doc Flexner, he would say nothing of the getaway tonight. There must be some human feeling in Crump. He surely would take the fugitives.

CRUMP was out in the skiff now, and Ott was jerking at the line. Crump had an oar, and as a shift of searchlight lowered, the two men and the skiff were in black silhouette against the illumined mist by the paddle-box.

"Who are they?" cried Nellie Flexner sharply.

"I was struck down," answered her father simply. "Where are we? Adrift—then what boat is that?"

"Tommy!" cried the girl shrilly.

For she knew. That merciless eye of light smiting on them, the dim red and green points wide below, the clang of an engine bell somewhere, and the short burring blasts of the Pittsburgher's siren again.

Dever had almost reached the two men struggling with the skiff when he saw Danny Crump stiffen upright, holding the oar. Crump was staring into the white fog wall. Ott's thin shoulders came up. He, too, staring, listening.

For, upon the last note of the whistle, the unseen hound answered. It was near. Frightfully near. It grew out of the fog under Danny's feet and arose like a dying echo to ring in the empty coal spaces behind them.

A tired dog's voice. Lonely, as if seeking the hand of a friend, beseeching to be comforted, and then thrilling off to that mournful warning.

Crump dropped the oar flat on the water. He turned and collided with Ott just as the towner had shoved away from the *Belle's* side. Tommy saw them in the searchlight, two clutching figures yelling in the drifting boat.

Well, that hope was ended. Tommy ran back to Nellie Flexner, who held to her father at the foot of the stairs.

"We can do nothing. Nellie, I waited too long to save you! Nellie, I stuck by it for you!"

"Look!" the river girl cried breathlessly.

She was not used to seeing men die. But now, riding out of the mist, cutting the white fog with their black shadowy prows, came the coal scows. There was no more than a choked cry, the faintest sort of crash as the barges wallowed over the skiff. Grunting and swinging in their chains the van of them swung slowly on.

It was no more than if a leviathan had swallowed a gnat—and then that red light came on dimly to the *Bayou Belle.* Men were shouting up on the empties. Tommy could see poles raised and figures moving.

"Look out now," Tommy tried to comfort. "The crash. Maybe they won't hog us under flat. Maybe some of 'em can throw a line."

And then the fleet rode on them. There was a dull rip of wood as the overhang of the port barge bearing the light sheered upon the *Belle's* frail engine-room siding. Then on past, growing to huge bulk as they slipped along the bow.

Tommy stood gaping. A bull-necked mate was cursing him from the corner barge. No light! Why, even a river babe, no matter what the emergency, would not fail to find a light for a river drifter! Tommy listened to that raucous voice.

"She went past us by inches," he murmured. "Nell, think of that—by inches. Hear her flap-paddles. They ain't going to stop. A Pittsburgher don't give a! ——"

The flanks of the scows bumped and jarred the *Belle*. The tow-steamer behind swung in sight, rows of lights like a carnival, and wildly cursing pilots. Then the steady crunch of her paddles again fighting the stream on into the fog.

Tommy ran and got a lantern now. There was much to do before he could warp a line somewhere to a bank below. But he was exulting. How wonderful to work swiftly, with Nellie snapping keen directions by his side!

Old Doc Flexner sat on a cordage pile and watched.

He put a hand groggily to his head when the two came forward again in the lantern flickers.

"Dever, I just thought I heard my dog. That one I gave to Mr. Jeffry years ago. Every season, down-river, I used to land at Saul's and go in back to see that hound. He never forgot me. He had a funny call. Always, in the swamp, as if seeking me. That great hound of Jeffry's, he must be old now."

"Heard him!" yelled Tommy. "When? Where?"

And somewhere on the night it came. Mournful, plaintive, weary, the cry of the lone trailer from whose voice Danny Crump had fled under the jaws of the fleet.

"My ——" whispered Tommy, "there it is again. Now explain it! Crump killed him. I saw him beat to death!"

"What is that?" said Nell curiously. "Driftwood hanging to the headlines, Tommy! Who threw 'em off the towhead? I see, now. There's an old levee engineerin' raft hung afoul of the *Belle's* bows. Driftin' on us in the dark."

Tommy ran silently to the side. He sprang down under the landing stage. They heard his startled cry. Nellie Flexner went there with the lantern and shot its rays overside.

Tommy was kneeling on a weed-grown mat all but submerged in the yellow water. He held something in his arms.

"A dead dog on that raft?" said Nellie. "Or what?"

Young Dever lifted a limp wet body over the side and climbed up after. He called in a low voice to Dad Flexner.

"That raft came after us driftin' in the eddy. Crump jerked the moorin'-stake out of its lines to beat Pal with. The raft kept on us, circling in the eddy. Dad, look here!"

He lifted the old dog's yellow head to the lantern light. Nellie Flexner could not understand the feeling of these two men.

But being the right sort of woman she was silent as Dad and Tommy groped over the wet limp body.

"He's dead!" blurted young Dever, stroking the thin neck and the gaunt ribs. "Dad, he lived long enought after Crump beat him to save you. Come driftin' along and hounded Crump to his death. Why, it was tearin' up that stake to kill Pal with that turned the raft loose to bring the dog after him. Haunted, that's what Crump was by that howl in the fog."

Dad Flexner lifted Pal's bruised head and watched the dull eyes. Pal shifted his jaws on Dad's kneee and moved his tail.

"He ain't dead. He's goin' to live to end his days on the sunny side o' the *Belle's* cookhouse. Nellie, run warm some milk. Get some hot water and towels. Pal, you old rascal, you and me served it out on the river—you and me—old-timers."

"Wonder if he could pull through to eat weddin' cake next April some time?" muttered Tommy. "How about it, Dad?"

"Ask Nellie," smiled Dad. "Pal will be there if you and Nellie fix it up."

THE SLAVE OF MARATHON

The Story of a Sword through the Ages ...

by Arthur D. Howden Smith

Author of "The Forging," "A Manifest Destiny," etc.

NOTE. Each story in this series is built around a group of characters, but the real hero—or heroine—is the sword, "Gray Maiden," which is traced from its forging through the different hands that wielded it down to modern times. Made for the greatest of the Pharaohs, it saw the rise of Greece and the crowning of Alexander's fortunes; it was witness to the greatness and the decay of Rome; it held back the rush of Islam; it knew the birth-pangs of the New World and the last agonies of the Old. There are wide gaps in its history. For generations upon generations it was hidden in tomb or burial mound or hung in grim quietude on the walls of armories. Yet often when men turned to war, eager hands reached out for it, and swung its shining blade in the van of battle. As some medieval owner scratched in the hard, gray steel—

Gray Maide men hail Mee
Deathe doth Notte fail Mee.

WHITE tentacles of sea-mist fluttered out from the dense bank that overlay the plain, and spiraled upward through the darkness along the mountain slopes. A charred glow in the east, beyond the invisible rim of the Ægean, was the first indication of the dawn. Closer at hand, in copse and grove and thicket, fires were crimson blobs against the green background of the foliage, and the men who crowded each circle of warmth were specters, dwarfed and distorted by the tossing shadows and the twining ribbons of mist. It was very cold, a damp cold that pierced to the bone.

Glaucus squatted as close to his fire as he could come in the press of slaves—and since he was a big fellow, that meant close enough for comfort—and gnawed diligently at the handful of raw onions and hunch of black bread which were the slaves' ration. The slow grinding of their jaws sounded through the crackle of the flames and the sullen murmur of comment.

"By Hercules, this onion is rotten—"

"Be content, Zike, the bread is also sour—"

"Yes, yes, any food is good enough for slaves to fight on—"

"Do you see the hoplites eating the dust from Antigonus' bins!"

Glaucus scowled at the last speaker.

"Go to the War-Ruler and demand us a sheep," he sneered.

"No, no, it is you Callimachus consults," retorted the other.

Gruff laughter applauded thrust and counterthrust. It was interrupted by a hail from the lower hillside.

"Ho, Glaucus! The slave of Æschylus! Say to Glaucus that Giton summons him."

Glaucus stumbled to his feet, cramming the last crumb of bread and sliver of onion into his mouth and trampling his fellows right and left. He was a man of gigantic build, with a sour, resentful expression, and the slaves made way for him, unprotesting.

"May the Furies tear his liver," he growled. "It seems I am to have two masters, Giton as well as Æschylus. A poet is no easy task-setter, but a freeman who can not afford slaves of his own is worse."

The hail came again.

"Glaucus! Ho, Glaucus!"

"When the slave eats the master calls," quoted a wit.

Glaucus replied with a curse, and crashed

down the slope, forcing his way between the cedars and pines that rose above the lower shrubbery. He halted presently at sight of the glimmer of steel; and rounding a tree-trunk, came upon his master in converse with several higher officers.

"Giton is below," said Æschylus. "Go to him, and say that I follow."

Glaucus continued at a more moderate gait.

"This looks like battle," he ruminated. "And what have I done that I should be sent first to be slain?"

Steel glimmered ahead of him a second time—a broad belt of cuirasses—and he halted on the flank of a detachment of armored hoplites, leaning patiently on their spears.

"Ho, Giton!" he called softly.

"Is it you, Glaucus? Where is Æschylus?"

"He follows," answered the slave sulkily, as the thin figure of the freeman approached through the mist. "What madness is he up to now?"

"No madness," returned Giton, slinging his shield to his back. "We are to prepare for the battle. As you know, the Platæns joined us yesterday—"

"A thousand men!" protested Glaucus.

"A thousand Hellenes," agreed Giton. "And if the sacrifices are propitious this morning—"

"We shall all go to our deaths," exclaimed Glaucus. "Eleven thousand hoplites, and it may be thirteen thousand of us slingers and javelin-men—and against us more Persians than there are folk in Athens!"

"If all felt as you do, it might be so," rejoined the freeman. "But the Persians can never stand against the hoplites."

"The hoplites!" echoed Glaucus. "It is all very well for them, with armor to protect them, but what of men like me, who must go naked?"

"I have no armor," said Giton.

"You have a shield and a helmet—and a sword. That is something. I have my sling and a knife. The first Persian who—"

The voice of Æschylus drawled quietly almost at the slave's elbow.

"Now, who would have thought you a coward, Glaucus, with that great body of yours?"

"I am not a coward," snapped the slave. "But I say it is nothing for men to go into battle armed as you are, while we slaves—"

"Can outrun us in retreat," derided his master. "But I did not come to listen to your woes. We are going down into the plain, a few of us, to determine if the Persians have cavalry in their camp and to make sure that the marshes on our right can not be crossed. Giton, you will see that Glaucus does not—ah—lose us in the mist."

"Lose you!" rumbled Glaucus as he fell in with the freeman's little detachment of light-armed slaves. "It would serve you right if I was killed, and you had to buy a Libyan to replace me. I have a good mind to complain of you to the Archons. You never had a slave who could work as hard as I, and instead of appreciating me, you must throw my life away!"

HE TURNED to Giton.

"You are as crazy as any citizen of them all," he went on. "You were doing well at your carpentering until you had to march here. I don't see how you expect to profit from it."

"I would have preferred to stay at my carpentering, but when the Persians came what was a man to do?" countered Giton.

"Let the citizens fight," retorted Glaucus. "It is they who get the advantage out of wars."

"Are you sure? If the Persians conquered Athens my carpentering must suffer."

Glaucus snorted contemptuously.

"Yes, for you are a freeman. I suppose they might make a slave of you. But it would be no disadvantage to us, who already are slaves, to change masters."

"Are you sure?" the freeman challenged again. "Did you ever know one who had been a Persian slave?"

Glaucus became thoughtful.

"Yes, that is so," he acknowledged. "That fellow, Zike, was bought from a Tyrian, and he said he would rather be a slave in Athens than a freeman in Tyre. But he is always trying to say smart things!"

"A Persian slave who grumbled as you do would be slain," said Giton. "And as for beatings, you would live on them."

"Humph," grunted Glaucus. "Perhaps, but I still don't see what advantage you or I obtain by being killed to keep the Persians out of Athens."

Giton was silent for a while. The eastern sky was one vast sea of fire from the mountain tops, but the column down in

the plain of Marathon moved in a shadow-world of mist. The clanking of the hoplites' armor, the shuffling of feet, a few low-voiced orders were as distinct as thunderclaps in the quiet dimness.

"What is one man's life?" asked the freeman suddenly. "What are many men's lives—compared with the State?"

The slave regarded him, puzzled.

"Why, a man's life is—is—his life. It's the only one he can have."

"But how many men must die to make a city great?" persisted Giton. "Think, Glaucus! There is Æschylus, ahead of us. He writes poems that sweep all the people in the theater out of themselves. He is a greater man than I. But he ventures his life without thinking—that the city may be preserved."

"Yes, and he has a fine cuirass to preserve himself, and a helm and greaves," grumbled Glaucus, returning to his original complaint.

"He is a citizen; many men have lived and died to make him."

"True, and there were those who came before me did not sleep in the slaves' quarters, but a slave I am."

"That is the fate the gods send us," answered the freeman. "What the gods offer man must accept. Yet it must be pleasing to them to see men live and die, thinking of others than themselves."

"If you do not think of yourself, who will?" demanded Glaucus.

"True," admitted Giton. "And if the City be not greater than any man, it is less than any man."

"What care I if it be less than man or greater?" parried the slave. "It means nothing to me."

"But does it?" argued Giton. "Without it you might not be sure of food and clothing and a kind master and laws to make a slave's life easy."

"You may call my life easy," growled Glaucus, "but you are not a slave. What you say is all very well. It reminds me of what I have heard the philosophers disputing on the porch of the Acropolis. But as for the City, it sends me out here in a wool tunic, with a bag of stones, a sling and a knife, and if the Persians—"

A long-drawn, wailing cry came from the mist ahead of them, and the ranks of the hoplites clanked to a halt. Presently an order was whispered down the column:

"Giton's slaves are wanted up forward. Æschylus bids them hasten."

The freeman and his score or two of slingers and javelin-men trotted along the brazen line to where Æschylus crouched behind a myrtle-bush, staring into the mist.

"Ho, is it you, Giton?" he murmured. "Have you that big slave of mine? Then heed me. The Persians have an outlying force in front of their camp. That cry came from one of their sentries. It is my wish that your fellows should steal forward on the right, and take one of those sentries as soon as you have tested the morass under the foothills. Let Glaucus conduct your prisoner, but be sure to await taking him until you have tested the morass. Lose no time, for if the mist clears we dare not tarry in the plain, unsupported."

Giton's spare, bony figure straightened.

"It shall be done," he promised.

Æschylus rose, and gripped his hand.

"I would go with you, if I might; but you must be free to run, unhampered by armored men. It is for the City, Giton!"

The freeman's answer rang like a muted trumpet-blast.

"For the City!"

Glaucus smothered an exclamation of contempt. Citizen and freeman were equally foolish. Why, they spoke of the City as if stone walls were sacred as the very gods!

II

THE wailing cries of the Persian sentries sounded faintly behind them as the little band of slaves crept after Giton through the mist that was beginning to turn ruddy overhead, where the sun's rays smote level across the distant sea-floor. The course they followed trended to the right, and soon brought them to the edge of the morass which ran inland from the shore to the base of the mountains, a mucky slough, impassible for men even as unencumbered as themselves. Satisfied of this, Giton ordered the detachment to swing back into the middle of the plain to undertake the accomplishment of its second task.

"Keep together, and be ready to run up if I call," he said. "I am going ahead with Glaucus to capture a Persian, and perhaps have a look at their camp. Remember, the rest of you, be quiet, and leave the attack to me."

The slaves mumbled assent, and lurched along in their leader's tracks much like a herd of sheep. Glaucus was the only one to comment on the situation. The big slave had recovered from his early morning disgust, and was inclined now to savor the excitement of the venture; but he could not resist a thrust at Giton on the score of their previous argument.

"I see that you give the rest a chance to save their throats," he grumbled, "yet I am to go into the Persian camp with you. A cheerful enterprise!"

"You will do nothing that I do not do," returned Giton.

"Ah! Much good that will do me when I am impaled. You may talk all you please, but I—"

"The time is past for talking," said the freeman curtly. "You will be silent. Do you want to warn the Persians we are coming?"

Glaucus accepted this rebuke with a frown.

"Oh, very well," he answered, "we'll see who is first when the trouble comes."

And he made a considerable fuss over fitting a stone to the lip of his sling. But Giton continued without noticing the slave, sword drawn and ears and eyes alert.

The plain hereabouts was broken by the forked bed of a shallow brook, which tumbled down from the valley where the principal strength of the Greeks was concentrated, and Giton led his company into the meager shelter of the right fork, motioning to them to stoop low and make the most of the depression. The increasing power of the sun was burning the mist away, and occasional puffs of wind from the mountains tore lanes in the huge central bank which blanketed the country from the mountains' foot to the shore. One such lane opened up at this moment on the line Giton was following, and he and Glaucus had to fling themselves flat to escape detection, although the slaves behind them were still concealed by a tricky swirl of vapor. But the two took no thought to their companions, for they were occupied with the opportunity the wind had afforded them to spy on the enemy.

Where they crouched on the verge of the brook, they were raised slightly above the country nearer the shore, and the main Persian camp was plainly visible—a narrow huddle of booths and tents, swarming with men and backed by hundreds of galleys and transports, some beached and more at anchor. Six miles it stretched from horn to horn of the curving bay. Nearer, indeed, a scant bowshot from them, was the outlying camp, which Datis, the Persian commander, had formed to guard against a surprize attack at night. It was the sentries of this camp who had been hailing one another in the mist to give assurance that each was still alive and at his post. One of these men stood by the brook, leaning on his spear, so close that the watching Greeks could distinguish the pattern of his conical hat and long, quilted coat.

Glaucus wiggled in his excitement, and started to rise to his knees.

"I can take *him* for you, Giton! I'll knock him on the head with this stone. See!"

He lifted his sling.

"No, you would slay him," objected the freeman. "It is a live prisoner Æschylus must have. The *strategoi* would question him."

"I won't kill him," urged Glaucus. "That hat of his is padded like his coat. I'll strike him on it, and—"

He broke off amazed at an extraordinary spectacle which was disclosed to them by another eddy in the mist. The outlying Persian camp was farther toward the foot of the mountain than they were; it projected past them, ahead of them and to their left, parallel to the course of the brook. The open area in the mist had widened abruptly, and revealed the progress of a strange rite or ceremony on the Persians' front. A considerable body of the long-skirted infantry were arrayed in line, and midway of them, facing the Greek position, stood a giant officer in brazen mail, upholding stiffly a lean, straight sword of gray steel. He was not brandishing the blade or gesturing with it, rather he appeared to be addressing it, and whatever he said, the soldiers at his back shouted some response.

"He prays to the sword," murmured Glaucus.

"I never heard the Persians worshiped a sword," answered Giton.

"But he does. Gods, but it is a good blade! Look to the sheen of it."

"I am more interested in that sentry you said you could stun for me," said the freeman. "Show me your skill, and—Wait! Wait! What will you do?"

For the slave had risen to the straddled position of the slinger, and already was whirling his leathern weapon around his head.

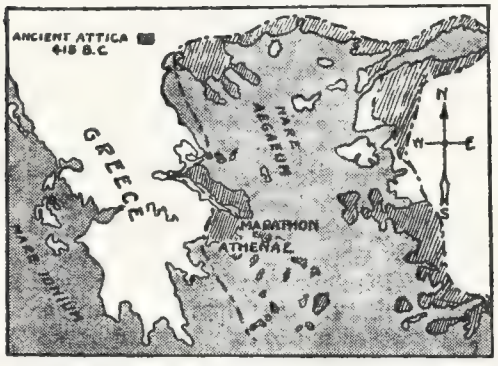
"I am going to slay that Persian. He is a great man, Giton. Better to bring him down than a poor—"

"Hold," remonstrated the freeman, jumping up in his dismay. "No, no, we can never take that man. He is a *strategos*, at least. What use would he be to us, dead? At the other—"

It was too late. The stone whirred away into the air, and the huge officer dropped with a crash of mail as it rapped his helm. Giton wrung his hands.

"You fool!" he cried. "Now, we shall be discovered. Quick! At the sentry. No, wait—he sees us—oh, go on, go on! Loose, fool, loose!"

The Persian officer was on his feet again, shaking his head like an angry bull, gray sword flashing as he peered this way and



that to discover his antagonist. The sentry, too, was staring up the brook, and shouted a shrill warning at sight of the two Greeks. But Glaucus, to do him justice, was not behindhand in remedying his error. He had a second stone in his sling, and was whirling it to launch at the sentry even as he grumbled at Giton's unreasonableness.

"You are never satisfied. I was of a mind to have that sword. It has the look of a stout blade. Not that a sword means anything to you, who have one. Well, there goes your sentry. Shall I take him?"

"Who else?" snapped Giton. "Be swift, and I will cover you."

For the collapse of the sentry had drawn the attention of the Persians in the outlying camp to the Greeks who lurked in the bed of the brook. Shouts and yells directed the officer of the gray sword to that quarter, and he led his men forward at a run; but fortunately a wind-puff from a different direction drove the mist swirling ahead of him, and friends and enemies were swallowed up again. A confused shouting echoed dully over the plain.

III

GLAUCUS found his victim without difficulty, ascertained that the man's heart was beating and slung him lightly over one broad shoulder, then trotted back up the brook until a hail from Giton summoned him to the left side of the watercourse.

"We shall be lucky to get off," said the freeman unhappily. "The Persians have been as far as this, but something distracted them. I think they have been fighting the rest of our party; I heard men calling to one another in Greek."

"Oh, we shall get off," replied Glaucus. "If the Persians catch us you can carry this fellow I have on my shoulder, and I will teach them a lesson. Bah, you are fortunate to have me, Giton. I do not know what you would do elsewise."

"You do not!" observed Giton. "Suffer me to remind you that you require your wind to carry that sentry to Æschylus. I will make good your retreat."

The slave chuckled good-naturedly.

"That is to be seen," he said. "Up to this point it is I who have pushed the fighting. Ho, Giton, two Persians have I struck down!"

"It would have been better had you struck down the one I bade you to," rasped Giton. "In that case, we should have—"

One of the vagrant breezes that blew out of the mountain heights tore at the dissolving mists and rent them in twain. In a breath Giton and the slave were robbed of all protection; the plain lay bare around them, dotted with groups of friends and enemies. The other slaves were scattered in twos and threes, running for the protection of the small clump of hoplites Æschylus led, who were formed up under the mountain wall. A horde of Persians were in pursuit, the foremost just across the brook from Giton and Glaucus, and in advance of all the giant officer with the gray sword, who howled exultantly as he veered to the left to cut them off.

"Can you run faster?" panted Giton.

"Easily," boasted Glaucus. "But instead, do you take this fellow as I suggested, and I will have another try at Gray Sword over there."

The slave halted in his stride, fumbling for his sling with one hand while he balanced his captive with the other.

"Hurry," he urged petulantly, "I can't do everything."

But Giton faced him with eyes blazing.

"Slave," the freeman's voice was so cold that Glaucus involuntarily shivered, "what I bid you to do that shall you do. Put up your sling, and run."

"But I can kill him this time."

"Run or I slay you as you stand!"

There was no uncertainty in Giton's gray eyes, and Glaucus ran; but the slave still had breath to spare for grumbling.

"Talking of killing me, eh? You couldn't get some one else to slay me, so you might as well do it yourself. This is fine treatment for an honest slave! Yes, yes, we shall see what the Archons have to say of it."

"If you lose your prisoner, do not try to reach Æschylus," answered Giton grimly. "You would die as surely at his hand as at the hand of a Persian."

The freeman glanced back over his shoulder with a worried frown, for the Persians were gaining upon them; the officer of the gray sword was only a few spear-lengths behind, his immense black bush of beard bristling savagely, his face convulsed with fury. He shouted hoarsely as Giton looked around, and redoubled his efforts.

Giton measured the distance which was yet to be traversed to reach the protection of Æschylus's spears, and shook his head.

"It is too much," he said.

"Eh?" grunted the slave.

"I must stop and hold back that Persian who is so close on our heels," explained Giton. "You can never reach Æschylus before he overtakes us."

"Why does not Æschylus come out to aid us?" snapped Glaucus.

"His men are too few. Go on, Glaucus. Run like Pheidippides."

Glaucus looked back in his turn, and exclaimed in dismay.

"You can never stand up to that fellow! He is as big as I am—and mailed, besides."

A faint smile showed in Giton's face.

"That is probably true, but this is one of those times when the City is greater than a man's life."

He slackened pace, but the slave reached out a knotted arm and dragged him on.

"What? What's this?" growled Glaucus. "You are no fool, Giton. The Persian will slay you. Hurry on with me. If he catches up we'll turn on him together."

"And lose the prisoner." Giton twitched free of the other's grasp. "On what that fellow has to say may depend whether the *strategoi* will decide for battle."

The slave slackened his pace to match the freeman's.

"You'll be killed," he babbled. "That sword— Here, you take the prisoner, and let me—"

The steely ring gritted again in Giton's quiet tones.

"I am not strong enough to carry him. It is your part to run and live today, mine to die. We both fight for the City. The gods speed you safe, Glaucus. Run!"

Glaucus bent his head dumbly and ran. A moment later he heard the clatter of meeting blades, and Giton's voice, vibrant now with a triumph beyond victory:

"For the City! Back, Persian, back!"

The slave peered over his shoulder again. Giton was dripping blood, and his shield was split in two, but he hewed recklessly at the Persian, careless of his own body if he might only force his enemy to yield ground. Glaucus choked a sob. A sudden gift of vision oppressed him, and he saw, so clearly that it hurt him, the carpenter's tiny shop as it had looked when he visited it with errands from the household of Æschylus. The clean smell of the cedar planks, fresh-hewn and stacked against the wall, mingled in his nostrils with the odor of the grease on the tools and the dusty perfume of the sawdust on the floor that was soft to his bare feet. Somewhere behind the shop he knew there was a wife, and he had heard a child's plaint.

A roar from the Persian sped him on. He fled through the gap the waiting hoplites opened to him, and cast his burden at the feet of Æschylus.

"It was not right," he stammered hoarsely. "The Persian had a sword—they prayed to it—Giton was not big enough—I could have saved him."

His master's shrewd, satirical face, lofty with a loftiness Glaucus had never understood, was grooved with bitter lines.

"A man has but the one death to die," answered Æschylus. "Is it not well that he should be glad of an ending such as must rouse the applause of the gods? One who dies like Giton is never forgotten."

"All for one prisoner," protested Glaucus.

"Who knows what may come of this prisoner?" returned his master. "Perhaps Hellas may be saved. Perhaps a slave's soul may be awakened. And I say again, Glaucus, a man who dies bravely never dies in vain."

The slave lifted a clenched fist.

"Then the gods grant I may find that Persian, and slay him as Giton would not let me."

Æschylus eyed him curiously.

"When it is your task to slay him I hope the gods will show you their favor. Meanwhile pick up this captive, and complete the task that was set you. Close ranks, hoplites. Quickmarch!"

IV

YESTERDAY Glaucus would have glared sulkily at the haughty bearing of the group of chiefs who crowded about his master. He would have envied covertly their graven armor and splendid weapons. Now he gave them no thought. His mind was occupied with the shattered heap out on the plain that had been Giton, and the Persian who had hacked the freeman to pieces with his terrible gray sword. He hungered for the order to battle. In battle he might have the fortune to meet the Persian giant. He would show Æschylus what a slave could do, unarmed, unarmored. By Hercules, he was as good an Athenian as any of them! If the City had more like him there would be no question of victory.

Then he heard Giton's name, and directed his attention to the report Æschylus was rendering.

"—was slain, but he held back the Persians until this slave of mine escaped with the prisoner they had taken, as Militiades directed. The slave declares the morass is impassable—"

"Did you, yourself, try it, slave?" interrupted Miltiades, who had been chosen to command that day.

"Yes," answered Glaucus gruffly. "Seeing that I was the heaviest of those with him, Giton sent me in until I was mired over the knees."

"Good tidings!" exclaimed Miltiades. "But what of their horsemen?"

"The prisoner said that the horses all had been sent to Eubœa for pasturage," replied Æschylus.

"What of that, slave?" interposed Callimachus, the Polemarch or, War-Ruler, who represented the Archons in the counsel of the *strategoi*. "Did you approach sufficiently close to see into the camp?"

"There are no horses in the camp," said Glaucus.

"But how can you be sure?" demanded one of the *strategoi* who were of the party opposed to giving battle, a man named Lysimachus. "They might be concealed."

"When a score of men come out from a tent that is only large enough to house a score of men there are no horses concealed in it," returned the slave contemptuously.

The *strategos* flushed.

"Your slave is free-spoken, Æschylus," he complained.

"He answered a question that was put to him, and with sense," spoke up Miltiades. "Thus it appears that we have not to fear the attack of the Persian horse if we bring on a battle. Also, that the plain is constricted in width by the morasses on either side—for I have already determined that the swamp on the left can not be crossed. The sacrificial omens are propitious, and therefore I urge upon you all, as I have urged before, that we seize this last opportunity to strike for freedom."

"But if we wait until the full of the moon the Spartans will come to our aid," objected the *strategos* who had complained of Glaucus.

"And it is equally likely that the Persians may be reinforced," retorted Miltiades. "They may bring back their cavalry from Eubœa. They may call in other forces. There are those in Athens who may be persuaded to make use of factional differences, and surrender the city by treachery."

No man answered him, but after an interval the War-Ruler spoke:

"We have a serious decision to make. Let us vote upon it. Those of the *strategoi* who favor the advice of Miltiades stand with him; those who oppose him stand back."

There were ten of the *strategoi*, one for each of the tribes into which the Athenians

were divided, and they separated five and five.

"Yours is the casting vote, Callimachus," said Miltiades.

The War-Ruler assented gravely.

"It is a great responsibility you lay upon my shoulders, Athenians. If harm comes of what I say my name shall be accursed."

"And if you vote wisely, oh, Callimachus," cried Miltiades, "you will win for yourself an immortality of fame. For it rests with you either to enslave Athens or to assure her freedom. Never, since they were a people, have the Athenians been in such danger as they are at this moment. If they bow the knee to the Persians they will have set over them for masters the outcasts they have expelled from their midst. But if we fight, and are victorious, as I believe we can be, Athens has it in her to become the first city of Greece."

"Not so! No, no!" cried several of the chiefs opposing him.

And Lysimachus called to Miltiades direct:

"How can you advise us to fight when we number at the most 11,000 hoplites? As for the light-armed troops, you are not so foolish as to reckon them, seeing that almost all are slaves like this fellow here."

He pointed to Glaucus, who stood with arms folded over his powerful chest a pace behind Æschylus.

"I struck down two Persians out there," growled the slave.

THE *strategoi* regarded him in amazement, and Lysimachus reached for his sword, then shrugged his shoulders, and said coldly to Æschylus:

"After all, he is your slave. Slay him yourself."

"Why should I?" inquired Æschylus. "He spoke the truth."

Even Miltiades looked aghast, and the War-Ruler protested:

"The fate of Hellas hangs upon what we do today. Shall we linger to discuss the boast of a slave?"

Æschylus pursed his lips in a whimsical grimace.

"Nevertheless, Callimachus, the gods have many ways of making manifest their will. It is possible they speak through the mouth of a slave."

"You are pleased to talk as a poet rather than a warrior," answered the War-Ruler coldly. "It is true that the Persians have no heavy infantry to match the hoplites, as Miltiades contends, but of light troops they have many more than we, chosen archers, freemen, while we— But it is a purposeless discussion. They can sweep our slingers and javelin-men from the field."

"But how, if we contrived that in doing so they should cause their own defeat?" proposed Miltiades. "You smile, Callimachus. But I say it can be done. Mass our strength on the wings, leaving the center weak—five thousand hoplites on the right, five thousand on the left, in the center a thousand hoplites backed by all the light-armed troops."

"We should be split apart," derided Lysimachus.

"Yes, the center would break at the first shock," agreed the War-Ruler.

But Miltiades pointed down into the plain, which was spread out at their feet.

"The mountains bend inward to the center," he said. "See! Below us here the distance to be covered is twice that to right and left. So the wings would meet the enemy first. They would be fighting before the center engaged; the Persians would be fleeing from the wings by the time the center came up. Is that plain?"

Strategoi of both factions nodded eagerly. The face of Æschylus was lit with high resolve. Only Glaucus stared moodily at the long sweep of the Persian camp.

"The Persians will break the center, as Callimachus has said, continued Miltiades. "They will pursue it, and the wings can close in upon them in the midst of the plain and destroy them."

"If they do not turn right and left upon the wings after defeating the center," suggested Callimachus.

"That will be for the center to check," answered Miltiades. "The center may be defeated and broken, but it must die to a man sooner than leave the Persians free to turn upon the wings. And surely, the gods have veiled their faces from us if we can not find enough Athenians, free-born and slaves, who will dare all for the City!"

"Here is one slave," growled Glaucus.

"And the slave's master," added Æschylus.

Several of the *strategoi* who supported Miltiades called that they would fight in the center, but the War-Ruler raised his hand for attention.

"Who is this slave who is so glib of tongue amongst his betters?" he asked fiercely.

"One of two men who have struck for the City today," replied Æschylus. "If we ask his kind to die for us, and find them willing, we can do worse than permit them a free tongue—which is the least dangerous of all liberties, I think."

"It is a good sign," cried Miltiades. "If a slave is fearless, can we be less so?"

Callimachus plucked at his beard, uncertain, pondering.

"Tell me, slave," he asked suddenly, "why are you anxious for battle?"

Glaucus answered hesitantly, like a boy conning a lesson:

"I—seek—vengeance—and—a sword."

"But why, slave? Why are you willing to risk death?"

"Giton showed me," said Glaucus simply. "A man must be willing to fight for what he has. He owes it—to the City."

"To the City!" repeated Æschylus. "Did I not say the gods might speak through a slave?"

"I am content," said Callimachus. "My vote is for battle. Miltiades, bid the trumpets sound."

V

A CONFUSED clamor rippled from end to end of the Persian camp as the Greeks burst from the shelter of the trees; and solid columns of well drilled Medes filed out to meet the attack, attended by throngs of other troops, bowmen and javelin-men, representatives of half the nations of hither Asia and Egypt and Ethiopia—careless of order, but confident of the downfall of Hellas.

Across the plain the hoplites moved in compact masses of thousands, bristling with spears, except in the center where a bare handful were strung in loose formation to cover the unarmored freemen and slaves. Because of the longer distance the center had to cover, as Miltiades had predicted, the two wings were in action with the enemy before the center had established contact; but what Miltiades had not foreseen was that the remorseless pressure exerted by the wings tended to force the Persians in upon themselves, so that when the center finally came to the shock, it was opposed by an impenetrable array that increased from moment to moment.

Two columns, one of Medes and one of Dacians, lightly armored in comparison with the hoplites, to be sure, but disciplined and used to victory, converged upon the tenuous line which was captained by the *strategoi*, Themistocles and Aristides—Themistocles, who was to be the founder of the Athenian navy and the victor of Salamis, Aristides, who was to lead the hoplites twelve years later in the final overthrow of Persia on the glorious field of Platæa. The air was black with buzzing arrows almost before the Greek slingers realized that death was in their midst, and discharged their answering hail of stones over the heads of the hoplites.

Glaucus, behind his master, saw the slingers on each side of him pierced by the hard-driven arrows of Phrygian bowmen, saw hoplites collapsing in the ranks with shafts feathered in neck and armpit, groin and thigh. He whirled his sling as fast as he could unpouch stones, seldom attempting to aim—content to discharge his missiles into the dense ranks of their assailants.

But he had time only for half a dozen shots. Then the Persians and Dacians had lapped the flanks of the dwindling line of hoplites and repeated on a small scale the treatment their comrades to right and left were receiving from the Greek wings. The hoplites slew until their arms ached, Glaucus and his brethren fought with knife and javelin or such weapons as they might snatch from the fallen; but five Persians leaped to take the place of each man killed or crippled. And always as Glaucus fought, he kept a vigilant watch for the tall warrior of the gray sword.

The battle was still undecided when Giton's slayer appeared. By dint of heroic efforts, Themistocles and Aristides and their motley bands had destroyed the two columns of Persians and Sacians; to right and left the wings were forging ahead, bearing down the desperate enemy by the steady thrust of their spears. In the center the Greeks had given ground—it was part of the price they paid in stemming the first onslaught upon them.

And now Glaucus, panting beside his master in an interval of the combat, saw three fresh columns of the long-coated Persian infantry of the Immortals—tall men, with braided beards and high, peaked helmets and oblong wicker shields—tramping through the ruck to renew the assault. At

their head strode the warrior of the gray sword, his brazen helm and mail agleam in the afternoon sunlight, his lean blade flashing above the chased brass of his shield.

AS HE came on he tossed the sword high in air, and caught it again, brandishing it as if in invocation, and the men who followed him responded with a deep-throated roar.

"See," whispered Glaucus. "They pray to it."

Æschylus sighed and stepped into his position in the diminished rank of the hoplites.

"Perhaps," answered the poet. "Any man is to be excused for praying to any gods this day. Stand to it, Glaucus. Remember Giton."

But the slave never heard him. Already Glaucus had his stone in the sling and was whirling it around his head.

"Ah!" he gasped with his effort, and released it; but it dinted into the brazen warrior's breastplate. The Persian scarcely felt it.

Grinding his teeth, Glaucus cast again, and struck his enemy's helm a glancing blow, no such outright rap as had knocked him sprawling that morning. The Persian shook his head like a bull that has been bitten by a fly, and strode on. He was singing now, his voice resounding above the clamor of the fray. Glaucus sought a third stone, placed it carefully in the lip of the sling and marked the range.

"Ah!" He let it go, and could have knifed himself as it shattered on the polished surface of the brass shield.

"The gods have deserted you, it seems," commented Æschylus, dressing the heavy spear that was the hoplite's chief weapon. "Keep my back, for there are only enough of us for the one rank."

"Yes, the gods will have none of my sling," said Glaucus furiously, and he threw it from him. "Sling, I am done with you! Henceforth I fight with what weapons I can come by."

"Try for the gray sword," advised Æschylus.

"I will," snarled the slave.

The three columns of the Immortals crashed into the slender line of hoplites, pushed it back and ground it up in a broken mass of light-armed troops, slaves and freemen—Persians and Greeks, inextricably mingled. The center had caved in. Slingers and javelin-men broke and fled. The hoplites were running together in groups of a score or a dozen and standing back to back, prepared to die if necessary, determined to hold what was left of their position. Glaucus, a dead Persian's sword in his hand and a riven hoplite's shield on his arm, ran forward in the press to meet the giant of the gray sword, who was battering down all opposition that was offered him. The lean, straight blade sheared helm and breastplate—made nothing of tempered bronze and steel. Whenever it struck it maimed or slew, and its owner talked to it, sang to it, besought it at times, and the troops who followed him thundered the response Glaucus had noted before.

Afterward a slave who understood Persian translated invocation and response for Glaucus:

> Drink deep, O, Gray Handmaid of Death!
> Be a steep wall to protect thy wielder,
> Lead thy servants to the slaughter,
> Feed us who feed thee!
>
> We will not flinch from thee,
> We will come after thee,
> Handmaid of Death!

The gray sword had just lopped a man's arm as Glaucus came within reach of its owner, and the slave struck quickly, thinking to take the Persian by surprize. But with one of his bull roars, the brazen warrior spun upon his heel, and caught the blow on his ruddied blade. The slave's sword shivered into atoms, and Glaucus saved himself from the return blow by plunging head foremost over the ground. His hand clutched at the first weapon available, a hoplite's spear, and scrambling to his feet again, he ran back at the Persian, the spear leveled breast-high. But the gray sword's master laughed at this menace, caught the spear-point on his shield, and as it glanced, hewed off the head and two handbreadths of the shaft.

"No weapon touches me," gibed the Persian in mongrel Greek. "That is the virtue of this sword—and the name of it is Death."

He struck again, and as he struck Glaucus hurled the hoplite's shield at his face. The Persian checked his sword-arm in air and raised his own shield to ward the clumsy missile—and Glaucus leaped like an angry snake, flinging his body low and hard,

so that he dived beneath the Persian's shield, wrapped his arms around the brazen greaves and tossed his enemy, clanging, to the ground.

The gray sword faltered in its descent, and the edge was turned on its master's shield, which had slipped down over the Greek's loins. A startled bellow from the stricken giant became a snarling mumble of protest, a babble, a whine, a groan. To and fro they tussled in the dust, unheeded beneath the stamping feet of the combatants; and the Greek, half-naked, was always atop of the Persian, weighted by his mail.

Twice the brazen giant tore his sword-arm free, and slashed wildly at his nimble foe. Each time Glaucus twisted to avoid the cut. And after the last effort the slave succeeded in pinning his enemy's arms with sinewy knees, stabbed his thumbs into the hairy throat, and with a sharp wrench broke the Persian's neck.

Glaucus snatched the gray sword from the stiffening fingers, and tottered erect.

"So, Giton," he murmured, "rest at peace. Ha, I always craved a sword. By Hercules, what a blade!"

The metal was interlaced with thousands of little whorls and curling lines, and a sinister light flared in the dull heart of it. A tingle ran up the slave's arm from the wire-wrapped hilt, and that tingle became a fire, a flame, a gust of extraordinary energy and emotion.

He circled the blade around his head, exhaustion forgotten, his whole being exalted by the deadly purr of the keen edge, and he shouted hoarse phrases that were novel to his slave's tongue:

"Forward, Athenians! For the City! For the honor of your temples! For your fathers' graves! Hellas conquers! For the City! Forward!"

The weary hoplites took up the cry, the Immortals wavered, dismayed by the death of their leader, superstitions aroused by the glint of the gray sword in their faces. The freemen and slaves, who had thought only of flight, commenced to retrace their steps and drifted down to resume the attack. Themistocles succeeded in reforming a fragmentary line, which slowly advanced again. On the wings Callimachus and Miltiades wheeled their victorious hoplites against the flanks of the inchoate multitude of the Persian center. In the snap of a finger the Persian army dissolved into a herd of fugitives, each man intent on gaining a place in the galleys which were already pushing off from the beach.

VI

THE *strategoi* were gathered before the tent of Datis, the Persian commander, when Æschylus fetched Glaucus from the scene of the last struggle on the shore.

"This is he who made good the center when the rest of us had failed," said the poet.

Callimachus offered Glaucus a hand nearly as blood-stained as his own.

"You have deserved well of the City, slave—"

Glaucus cast the hand of the War-Ruler from his, and Æschylus explained quickly:

"No more a slave, Callimachus. I have freed him. Shall an Athenian hold for slave a man who has saved Athens?"

A murmur of approval answered the poet, and he dropped a friendly palm on the ragged shoulder of the man beside him.

"What said I when the sun was overhead, Athenians? That the gods might speak for us through a slave! And but for a slave I think we should be dead or disgraced who gather here, and Athens would be a city in mourning by the morrow."

"No, no," denied Glaucus in his rude slave's voice that had acquired a ghostly timbre of warrior's pride. "Give the credit where it is due. Giton made me—Giton and this sword."

Miltiades bowed his noble head in the twilight.

"What man shall estimate the sum of his deeds?" he exclaimed solemnly. "We chiefs planned and wrought as best we could. But we must have failed, except that a poor freeman inspired a slave with the greatness of loyalty!"

"Any man may be a slave," said Æschylus, "and any slave may be a king."

"But not every king has a sword like mine," boasted Glaucus.

Miltiades, the far-traveled, Prince of the Chersonese, bent over the whorled surface of the long blade, and pointed a finger to a series of tiny symbols etched in the gray steel.

"Yet has it been a king's sword, Glaucus," he said, "for there is the Egyptian 'seft' for sword and some Pharaoh's emblem."

The worn features of Glaucus were suffused with a dim light—like the light of the rising sun burning through a sea-mist heavy with the night dews.

"Henceforth it shall be an Athenian's sword," he exclaimed.

And in truth, the Archons honored him with citizenship, and in after years a statue of him in his brown woolen tunic, sword in hand, was reared on the very spot where he turned at bay. But that statue long since became slaked lime in the wall of a Greek peasant's hut, and Glaucus was forgotten more completely than Æschylus—only the sword of the one and the plays of the other lived after them.

INSCRIPTION ON A POWDER HORN

by **A. Browne Ransdell**

WILLIAM WHITLEY, I AM YOUR HORNE;
THE TRUTH I LOVE, A LIE I SCORNE.
FILL ME WITH THE BEST OF POWDER,
I'LL MAKE YOUR RIFLE CRACK THE LOUDER.
SEE HOW THE DREAD, TERRIFIC BALL
MAKES INDIANS BLEED AND TORIES FALL.
YOU WITH POWDER I'LL SUPPLY,
FOR TO DEFEND YOUR LIBERTY.

THIS poetic legend is inscribed in the owner's carving on the two-pound powder horn carried by Col. William Whitley, famous pioneer and Indian fighter, builder of the first brick house in Kentucky and the reputed slayer of Tecumseh.

Collins' History in its description of the battle of the Thames, which occurred in 1814, credits Colonel Whitley with the slaying of Tecumseh. Col. Richard M. Johnson generally has been credited with the killing of the great Indian chief, but those who support the theory that Colonel Whitley slew the warrior point to the fact that Tecumseh was killed by two bullets that entered his body through the same hole and that it was Colonel Whitley's practise always to load his rifle with two bullets.

Colonel Whitley was a Virginian, born in Augusta, now Rockbridge County, of Irish parentage. He came to Kentucky in 1773 and was in his sixty-fifth year when he volunteered under Isaac Shelby and marched with other Kentuckians to the battle-ground around the western end of Lake Erie. He was killed in the battle of the Thames.

The house he built near Crab Orchard of bricks carried on pack horses over the Wilderness Trail still stands and a movement is under way to have it made the center of a State park.

SHADOW

by T. T. Flynn

Author of "A Matter of Judgment," "Pop," etc.

HIS mother named him George Washington Archibald Macgillicuddy. When Spreckles, the D. & R. road foreman of engineers between Rawlings and Mountain City, took a long chance and signed him on as a fireman, he gave his name as George Macgillicuddy. But the first time he shambled into the crew dispatcher's office Kelly, fireman on the Hill and Plain Express, took one look at his long, gangling, incredibly thin form and dubbed him "Shadow." And Shadow Macgillicuddy he became the rest of his natural life.

Shadow was tall and lean and, when viewed from the side, he did look something like the thin edge of a shadow. His head was crowned with red hair, and great freckles splotched his face and neck and arms. His eyes, a washed-out blue, surveyed the world half timorously, half wistfully and always cheerfully.

When the Macgillicuddys located in Rawlings, Shadow was the proud father of five bouncing, bawling and exceedingly troublesome youngsters. Five years later, when he had graduated from the extra list and was firing local freight, he was the prouder father of nine.

In those five years Shadow had become part and parcel of the D. & R. He was a born railroader, and every inch of his six feet two, every pound of his hundred and fifty-three, was attached to the road with a fierce loyalty. He knew it was the best road in the country, had the fastest locomotives, the best officials, the greatest heritage of pride, and he was almost humbly glad to be granted the favor of working on it.

Confidently he wove his future with that of the road. The years stretched away, an ever brightening path leading to an engineer's seat in a yard engine, a freight engine and finally a fast passenger engine, with the prestige and fat pay check that went with such glory. And at the end was the safe haven of a pension from the company and a final life of indolent ease, ending only in the grave. To Shadow's way of thinking man could wish for no more. And in his fifth year at his job he was well on the way to his desire.

Shadow's fifth year on the D. & R. was an off year and his household was not gladdened with an addition. But, early in his sixth year of service, nature, apparently regretting her niggardliness of the year before, bestowed triplets upon the clan of Macgillicuddy.

It was an epic event.

Shadow almost burst with pride when the news was brought to him by the harried midwife. And, after a palpitating inspection of the new arrivals and the assurance that the rest of his round dozen were being looked after by the neighbors, Shadow proceeded to get gloriously, thoroughly and completely soused.

That yearly inebriation was a fixed habit, almost a rite. In a manner of speaking it was Shadow's way of baptizing the new arrival into the home circle. And as such, it

was accepted by every one. What mattered it if Shadow did stretch things a little on that occasion. The time, for instance, when he wandered down to the ready lot, commandeered a yard engine and announced his intention of racing the Hill and Plain Express to Mountain City with it. And the year Woodrow Wilson Macgillicuddy made his advent into the world, when Shadow visited the roundhouse and, finding the turn-table operator absent, tried to make a merry-go-round out of the turn-table. Such things could be eyed tolerantly in view of the event and the generally excellent record Shadow made the rest of the year.

But even as the triplets bulked over the usual yearly arrival, so did Shadow's alcoholic celebration tower over former ones. Some of it may have been due to the vile concoctions he was obliged to accept for liquor, but there was no denying his enthusiasm. At that, things would have been all right if fate had not elected to play a hand.

Daniel Weegan, austere president of the whole D. & R. system, was making an inspection of the entire road. Jim Ryan, the heavy-set, iron-jawed superintendent of the Mountain Division, was conducting Weegan and his party over the division. For weeks preparations had been made for the visit. The roadbed was clean and orderly, buildings were newly painted, all scrap collected, old ties burned, the yards cleaned up, and at Rawlings, the roundhouse, the backshop and their attendant buildings were gone over as with a fine tooth-comb.

RYAN and Blanton, the Rawlings master mechanic, met the inspection party when they came on the Mountain Division at Rawlings and conducted them over the Rawlings property. All went well until they entered the roundhouse. Half-way through it they stopped by the side of a great mountain freight engine and listened while Blanton pridefully told them what a fine, upstanding bunch of men were on the Rawlings pay-roll.

"As fine a lot of fellows as you'll find on the whole road, Mr. Weegan," he said enthusiastically. "There's not a man among them who is not a sober, steady worker, who wouldn't go to the last ditch for the D. & R."

Daniel Weegan stroked his beard and nodded approvingly.

Spreckles, the road foreman of engineers, who was with Ryan and Blanton, added his bit.

"It's true," he said feelingly. "We have reason to be proud of every one of them."

"I like that," Weegan said heartily. "Our road is built on men, gentlemen. We can lay down the best steel, purchase the finest rolling-stock and furnish the best equipment on the market. But if we haven't the men, we won't have a road worthy of the name. Keep at it, weed out the unfit, treat the fit well, and we'll go far."

Ryan nodded.

"There's none but fit on the Mountain Division," he averred. "To the last man they are a credit to the road."

Weegan nodded again, and when Ryan saw it, he lifted the corner of his mouth at Blanton. There was little doubt that the Mountain Division was making a noble impression upon Weegan and the high officials who accompanied him.

Weegan turned to Ryan and spoke, but his words were overwhelmed as the bell of the freight hog beside them suddenly broke into wild clamor.

Weegan halted his remarks and frowned.

Ryan's face grew red, and Blanton, with a muttered curse, made for the cab of the engine. Before he reached the cab steps the whistle of the freight hog cut loose in a blast, and then the lanky form of Shadow Macgillicuddy leaned out the window. He was wild drunk and clutched a pint bottle, half full, in his right hand. He waved the bottle at Blanton and at the group and broke into song.

Weegan looked at Ryan and Ryan purpled under the glance and said to Spreckles thickly—

"That man—who is he?"

Spreckles shifted uncomfortably, but it was no time to be saving other men's shirts. His own was in danger, for a road foreman doesn't bulk very large in the eyes of the superintendent.

"I think it's a fireman, a man named Macgillicuddy."

"Think?" asked Ryan savagely. "Are you paid to think who the men under you are?"

"Well, I know," said Spreckles.

"Ha!" snorted Ryan, and looked at Blanton.

The master mechanic had stopped beneath the cab window and was glaring up at Shadow Macgillicuddy.

"You're fired!" he roared savagely.

Shadow leered at him.

"Fired!" he whooped. "'M fired! Wh'd I care. Tr'pl'ts!" He pulled on the whistle cord again and then waved the bottle at the party of officials. "Drink!" he urged hospitably. "Drink t' tr'pl'ts!"

Weegan, a noted dry, swelled with indignation. Ryan, seeing the careful plans of weeks being destroyed, gritted his teeth in suppressed fury.

Shadow broke into discordant song again, but before he had a chance to sing more than several bars, thunder, in the shape of Blanton, struck him. The master mechanic, driven by a fury equal to Ryan's, had scaled the cab steps, stepped behind Shadow, reached forth a long arm, plucked him bodily from the cab seat and jerked him back into the cab.

"You're fired!" Blanton cried, shaking the lanky form of Shadow until the faded blue eyes almost popped from their sockets.

The small matter of being fired or hired was of little import to Shadow Macgillicuddy at that moment. He giggled hugely and again essayed to sing.

Blanton, seeing that drastic action was necessary, hauled him down from the cab on the side away from the party and, hustling him away from the immediate vicinity, turned him over to a couple of machinists with rabid instructions to throw him off the property and keep him off.

But the damage was done. Weegan's visit to the Mountain Division, the visit which was to have been one triumphant, smooth tour, was flatter and cooler than a cold fried egg. When the presidential party passed over into the next division it left behind a dank chill cloud of gloom and a violent antipathy in the breasts of Spreckles, of Blanton and of Ryan toward all who bore the name of Macgillicuddy.

Which wouldn't have been so bad had there only been Shadow to consider. But there was Mrs. Macgillicuddy and twelve hungry youngsters in the offing.

BY THE next morning Shadow was sober, and he didn't remember that he had been fired. Blessed forgetfulness had wiped the painful scene from his mind and, secure in the tradition of former years, he reported for work.

Shadow got clear into the crew dispatcher's office without being acquainted with the fact that he had no job. He was gay in spirit, considering the hang-over that he had awakened with that morning, and he breezed through the door of the dispatcher's office, whistling a little ditty, and nodded to the men who were standing around inside.

"Howdy, men," he said gaily. "I suppose you've all heard of me good luck."

A silence fell over the room when the men saw who it was. To a man, they knew of the happening the day before and the black trouble which had descended upon the house of Macgillicuddy. They shuffled their feet uneasily, and none had the courage to answer Shadow.

He blinked and looked at them wonderingly.

"And have none of you heard I have triplets at me house?" he asked after a moment.

Not a man spoke.

Finally Henderson, the engineer who got the Hill and Plain Express after Pop Hand retired, spoke up gruffly:

"Ay, Shadow," he said gruffly. "There's not many could do it. An' it had to happen to a starved-lookin' galoot like you."

Shadow chuckled and the tension was broken.

"Results is what counts," he reminded them.

He straightened his long lean form, thrust out his flat chest and swaggered over to the rail before the crew dispatcher's desk.

"Here I am, Joe," he said cheerfully. "Mark me up, will you? I have need for much work, what with the increase and all."

Joe, the crew dispatcher, hesitated, and then passed the buck.

"I—I think Spreckles wants to see you," he told Shadow.

"Spreckles?"

Shadow wrinkled his brow thoughtfully, looked at Joe and then around at the boys.

"Now what could Spreckles be wantin' me for?"

No one said a word and Shadow looked at them and grinned.

"Maybe he's going to put me running for bringing distinction to the Mountain Division," he suggested. "They's none o' you has come to the front with such a contribution."

He favored them with a cheerful grin, and left the room jauntily. For what

could Spreckles want save to extend congratulations or impart good news?

Spreckles was in his office, his nose buried in a report, when Shadow entered. He did not see who it was until he looked up and stared full into Shadow's grin.

Shadow spoke first.

"Howdy, boss."

Spreckles' face grew red and he swelled visibly.

"Well?" he asked after a moment of silence.

"Joe said you wanted to see me," Shadow explained, and he twirled his shabby work hat on the end of his finger as he spoke.

"Want to see you?" Spreckles spoke as though the suggestion were anathema. "No!" he gritted, "I don't want to see you—ever!"

Shadow stopped the gyrations of his hat and looked at Spreckles in astonishment. He sensed that there was something decidedly wrong in Spreckles' attitude.

"Well, Joe said so," he finally replied uncertainly.

"What are you doing here anyway?" asked Spreckles irritably. "What were you talking to Joe for?"

Shadow stared at him, puzzled.

"I came to work. I went in Joe's office to get him to mark me up."

"Mark you up?"

Shadow nodded.

A thought came to Spreckles.

"While you are here, I'll fix you up," he said.

He reached into the drawer of his desk and pulled forth a pad of slips. While Shadow waited, his hat swinging uneasily on the end of his finger, Spreckles wrote. With a final jab of his pen he finished, blotted the paper and tore off the sheet on which he had written.

"There!" he said, tossing it across the desk. "There's the order for your time. Get it and beat it off the property quick. I don't want to see you."

Shadow gaped at him with his mouth open. His hat slid off the finger, dropped to the floor and lay unnoticed.

"My time?" he echoed, "My time?"

"Your time!" confirmed Spreckles.

"Wh—why," stammered Shadow, "what are you giving me my time for?"

"It's the custom," said Spreckles sarcastically. "When a man is fired he gets his time."

"Fired?"

"—— it, yes! Fired! Can't you understand plain English?"

"But," said Shadow painfully, "what are you firing me for? What have I done?"

"What have you done? Argggggh! What haven't you done?" Spreckles growled. "That's easier to answer."

Tiny beads of sweat came out on Shadow's forehead.

"What is it?" he begged. "Tell me."

Spreckles looked at him sharply and asked—

"You don't know?"

"No!"

"Not a thing?"

"Well," said Shadow painfully, "I got lit up a little yesterday. The missus had triplets, you know, an' I sorta had to blow off a little steam. But I got time off, and I wasn't drunk on duty. I have done it every year since I have been working on the D. & R. and no one has said there was any harm in it."

Spreckles leaned back in his chair and looked at Shadow.

"You didn't remember a thing when you sobered up?"

"No," said Shadow, "not a thing."

"Well," said Spreckles, and he shook his head feelingly, "you sure played —— yesterday."

He lighted a cigar and proceeded to acquaint Shadow with every detail of the day before.

"And," he finished, "you're fired as high as the Eiffel Tower, and that's all there is to it."

SHADOW took it quietly, but his faded blue eyes darkened with the dread of the days that lay ahead—jobless days, moneyless days, hungry days for him and for his family. He touched his lips with the end of his tongue, swallowed once or twice and then spoke, a trifle huskily.

"An' then I'm really fired, Mr. Spreckles?"

"You are," said Spreckles positively. "And be thankful that you have your life. There was near murder done yesterday. You have given the whole Mountain Division a black eye."

Shadow stooped, picked up his hat and turned the faded brim nervously in his

fingers. He started to speak and then said nothing.

Spreckles, who was a kindly man at heart, spoke further.

"You are through on the D. & R., Macgillicuddy. It would be worth my job if Ryan ever saw your name on the pay-roll again. You had best pack up and move somewhere else. I know it's hard, a man with a big family and all. But you put your foot in too deep this time."

Shadow swallowed and nodded.

"All right," he said, and his voice came husky, as if his throat was swelled almost shut. "All right, I'll try to make out somehow."

He clapped his old hat on his head, took the discharge slip and made for the door, and such was the blow he had been dealt that he collided with the side of the door, unseeingly, as if he was still half drunk.

In the days that followed Shadow tried to make out somehow. He remained in Rawlings, partly because he had no money to move away, partly because it was home. In Rawlings his roots were buried deep in the soil of familiarity. There, also, was his railroad, for the D. & R. was still his road. The fire of loyalty which had blazed with increasing intensity in Shadow's flattened chest still burned high. He was divorced from the company rolls, but his spiritual contact was not broken. To him the D. & R. was still the finest stretch of steel in the country, and he was a part of it. He felt no animosity toward Ryan, Blanton or Spreckles. He realized that he had acted in a manner ill befitting one who belonged on the D. & R. and felt the disgrace he had brought on the Mountain Division almost as fully as did those who had discharged him. And, feeling as he did, he remained close by that which had cast him off, obtaining in his groping way a measure of comfort from proximity to that which might have been.

His way was hard.

There were no factories in Rawlings. Nothing but the railroad and such business as catered to the railroad men and the farmer folk in the country roundabout. Shadow sought work futilely and with increasing despair. When it seemed as if every possibility had been exhausted he shambled into the grocery store of Abe Gatz and was hired to deliver groceries. The salary was small, for Abe Gatz was not the man to pay much money for anything and certainly not for something that most boys could do. Still, it was work, and Shadow clutched at it with the desperation of the jobless. It was something with which to battle the specter of want that had suddenly reared up into his life.

Every morning at six Shadow reported for work. All day he sat on Gatz's rickety wagon, clucked to the bony old horse and carried boxes of groceries into back doors. In addition he kept the store windows clean, swept out the store, put up orders, carted freight from the station, and kept the horse and stable clean.

But, though Shadow had a job, he also had fourteen mouths to feed on less than half what he had earned on the railroad. He began to wear a haggard look. After Gatz closed the store at six in the evening and Shadow was free, he often did odd jobs, such as cutting lawns, burying trash and sawing wood against the winter months to come.

The Macgillicuddy children grew scrawny and ragged. John, the oldest, worked for Gatz every Saturday. His brother, a year younger, obtained the Rawlings agency for several magazines.

Their income must still have been deficient, for one day one of the children was seen hauling a wash home, on the little wagon that Shadow had bought him in their more prosperous days. Game, plucky little Mrs. Macgillicuddy. She was much smaller than Shadow, with the burden of twelve children on her shoulders, many of them infants. Yet such was their need that she had to take in washing to keep bread in their mouths and milk in their bottles.

That washing must have been cruel for Shadow. He loved his wife with all his simple heart, and the thought of her adding washing to the rest of her cares bore down upon him heavily. His face showed it. It grew wan and pinched and deep lines became etched where once had been wrinkles of laughter. He tried desperately for other work that would pay more, but it simply was not to be had for love or money.

His plight was not unknown to Blanton and Spreckles. No man's state can long be hid in a community the size of Rawlings. Shadow delivered groceries to Blanton's back door, and occasionally Blanton saw

him and noted the ravages of circumstances on his pinched face.

And one day Blanton and Spreckles were walking home together when they passed one of the Macgillicuddy children struggling with a load of wash. The little wagon was wedged in a rut, and the frail strength of the youngster was inadequate to free it.

Blanton stopped, lifted up the wagon and set it on smooth going once more. After the youngster had thanked him gratefully and trundled off with his burden Blanton stood in his tracks and looked after him with a frown.

"That family is having the very —— of a time to make ends meet, Spreckles," he said. "Did you notice the shoes that kid has on? I saw his father the other day, and his own feet were shod no better."

"It's hard," agreed Spreckles, and he added, "Were it up to me, I would give the man back his place. What is done, is done. He's had his lesson, and he always was a good steady worker."

"Yes," said Blanton, falling into step beside Spreckles once more. "If it was up to us it would be all right. But it's not. Ryan sat in on this deal. If Macgillicuddy went back on the pay-roll and Ryan found it out—good night. You know Ryan."

Spreckles nodded. He did know Ryan. Every man on the division knew Ryan. If a man did his part beyond censure Ryan was all right, a fair and just man in the main. But let a man once fall, succumb to carelessness, neglect, let him do something out of the line of duty, and Ryan became stern and implacable. He had no use for the man who was not a smooth, efficient cog in the scheme of things. No. As far as Ryan was concerned the thing was over for all time, and to seek to reopen it would be an extremely foolhardy act.

Blanton and Spreckles let the subject drop.

AUTUMN dragged to a bleak end. The green leaves of summer gave way to flaming colors and, in turn, withered and fluttered to the ground. The days became crisp and the nights cool. And with the demand for winter clothes, for coal and the increasing appetites of the growing children, the Macgillicuddys were forced to retrench further. The rent was the only place where the pruning knife could be applied. So they moved from the comfortable house they had occupied since they first came to Rawlings, moved to a veritable shack down near the roundhouse, where the rent was negligible.

The sacrifice had some compensations for Shadow. They were near the railroad. Of an evening when he had no work to do, he would sit on the front porch and listen to the activities of the shops. To his ears came the roar of the blowers, the crash of iron mauls against the side of coal tipple cars, the *rat-a-tat* of boilermakers' air chisels, the whistles and bells of arriving and departing engines and the pop and rush of escaping steam from locomotive safety valves. It all blended into a soothing cadence which was the sweetest of music to Shadow Macgillicuddy.

And if he cared to do so, and he often did, he could walk a half a block and come out beside the main line tracks. There on a bank he would sit and smoke his stubby black pipe and watch the long freights rumble past; and the passenger trains as they came out of Rawlings and picked up speed for the run to Dickson at the foot of Twenty Mile Grade.

On the engines were men he knew, and often they waved at him. And he waved back and watched them thunder off into the distance with a wistful look in his faded blue eyes. After such an incident Shadow would sigh heavily and sometimes dream for a few minutes and sometimes uncoil his long, lanky form and shamble home to his brood and some task that remained to be finished.

December came, and with it the first snow and cold of the winter. Shadow still delivered groceries for Abe Gatz. It was cold work. Even with the retrenchment there was little money for clothes in the Macgillicuddy exchequer, and Shadow was thinly clad against the chill blasts. But he perched on the rickety wagon bravely and continued to make his smiling rounds despite wet, half frozen feet and chill flesh. And sometimes, though the bank alongside the railroad track was covered with snow, he found time to slip away in the early darkness and watch the trains pass for a short time.

In the middle of December the first heavy gale of winter arrived. It swept down out of the northwest, howling, shrieking, driving half snow, half sleet in cutting sheets across the landscape. Fortunately it did

not arrive until late afternoon when Shadow was almost through with his deliveries. But at that he was blue with the cold when he returned to the store. He drove the horse into the barn without stopping to unload the empty delivery boxes. His teeth chattered and chills raced through his body. He could think of nothing save the warm stove in the store.

His fingers were so stiff with the cold that he could hardly unbuckle the harness straps. But finally he stripped the harness off and flung it over the harness rack. Before he went into the store he threw fresh straw under the horse, carried water for him to drink and filled his feed-box. Not until he was sure that the dumb beast was comfortable did he leave the barn.

The red-hot stove in the store was a thing of joy. Shadow stood by it, soaking up the heat until his worn clothes smoked and became painfully hot. It seemed as if he would never get warm enough. Finally Abe Gatz spoke sharply from behind the counter.

"The floor iss very dirty, yess?"

Shadow nodded wearily and went for the broom. Gatz kept him busy until six o'clock. Shadow was almost grateful. He dreaded the thought of the walk home through the storm. But at last Gatz unwound the strings of his soiled apron from about his fat middle and emptied the contents of the cash drawer into a dirty salt sack. Another day was over and Shadow, hugging the stove until the last minute, finally found himself on his way home.

Darkness had fallen, and he stumbled and slipped in the mounting drifts. It was cold, bitterly so. He shivered and hugged his arms tight against his thin body in a futile effort to keep out the wind and hold in some of the body heat.

He passed the comfortable house which they had been forced to vacate and plunged on toward the little place where they were living. At least it would be warm. They were close to the railroad and the children had picked up much coal from along the tracks.

THE houses thinned out, and presently Shadow was wading knee-deep in unbroken drifts. At last he saw through the darkness the lights of his little place. Back of it, shining dimly through the darkness and the falling snow, were some of the roundhouse lights. Shadow looked at them as he plodded forward. They were symbols of a safe haven. Beneath them was steady work, good wages, a care-free life and agreeable companions. Regret that he was barred from them, a wave of homesickness for a warm cab, the smell of coal-gas smoke, of hot oil and steam swept him.

Just before he reached the front gate he heard above the howling wind the crashing exhaust of a great freight engine laboring along the main line. It called to him in a language which he knew and understood. He shivered in the icy blast and thought of the cab of the engine. The storm curtains were down, he knew, and the cab windows closed. It was warm and cozy inside and the fireman was sitting back at his ease, for the freight engines of the D. & R. had automatic stokers on them that fed coal on the fire with no effort on the part of the fireman.

Shadow stumped up his front walk to the porch and tramped the snow from his feet. In spite of the cold and the lure of the warmth on the other side of the door, he stopped for a brief instant to listen again to the measured beat of the freight train's progress.

He heard, and something else, as he stood with his senses sharpened and listening. Through the storm, over the noise of the passing train, he heard the whistle of the shops rise in a long, wailing blast.

Shadow stiffened and listened intently.

The door beside him opened and Mrs. Macgillicuddy peered out. She had heard Shadow's footsteps and wondered at his delay in entering. When she saw him standing there, peering off into the storm, she spoke sharply:

"George! What's the matter with you? Come in here out of the storm!"

Shadow shook his head and motioned for her to be quiet. The next instant the whistle came again and again. Smothered by the storm, overwhelmed by the noise of the passing freight, nevertheless it came clear to his straining ears. It was the fire signal at the shops. Fire, and a gale blowing. It could easily be a terrible thing.

Shadow turned and spoke to his wife.

"Fire!" he exclaimed excitedly. "There's a fire at the roundhouse!"

Mrs. Macgillicuddy sniffed. She shared none of Shadow's love for the railroad. If

anything she felt resentment against it. Much of their straitened circumstances she laid at the door of the railroad, and any reference to it was liable to provoke a hot reply. As she saw her husband standing out in the storm, felt her house getting cold from the door she held open for him and then heard him begin to talk about the railroad, her wrath boiled over.

"What of it?" she demanded sharply. "What's the railroad to you? Come in out of the cold. The house is getting all chilled off."

Shadow stared intently in the direction of the shops and said nothing.

"George Macgillicuddy," said his wife ominously, "you come in here!"

Shadow came, unwilling and slowly, but he came. In their house there was one ruling spirit, and it was not Shadow.

Mrs. Macgillicuddy bustled back into the kitchen, voicing her opinion of a man who would stand out in the storm mooning over a company that had fired him. Shadow paid her no heed. He prowled restlessly about the living-room with his coat still on. A dozen turns he made and then, with a guilty look at the door leading back to the kitchen, he opened the front door a trifle and applied his ear to it. The freight was dwindling away in the distance, the noise of the storm arose louder, and of the fire whistle there was no sound.

Shadow closed the door and again took up his restless pacing. There was a fire at the roundhouse, he knew. It might be small. It might be large and getting larger. In any event he felt that he must go to it. Not alone because it was a fire, but because it was a fire on the railroad—his railroad. In spirit he was still a part of the D. & R., and when danger or trouble threatened, he felt it his duty to answer.

Dishes rattled in the kitchen. The children's voices rose in a hum of conversation. Presently Mrs. Macgillicuddy spoke:

"Supper is ready, George. You can wash and set down."

Shadow stopped his pacing and, after a moment's hesitation, started for the kitchen door. Half-way to it he stopped and, on an impulse, went to the window, pulled the curtains aside, smeared a peep-hole in the frosting on the glass and peered out into the night.

What he saw made him forget the supper, forget his wife, forget his weariness, his damp feet, his recent chills which had hardly left him. Through the falling flakes of snow a red glow was rising over the shops. As he stared it increased, and a swirl which might have been smoke and might have been snow shot up from it.

SHADOW let the curtains fall back in place and stood undecided. It was a big fire. They would need every man they could get, and more. In common decency he should go. His hat lay on the chair by the front door where he had dropped it when he came in. He took a step toward it.

Mrs. Macgillicuddy called from the kitchen.

"George! Supper is on the table! The children are all seated and waiting on you! Are you ever coming?"

Shadow picked up his hat and grasped the door-knob in his hand. He took a deep breath.

"Not hungry," he called. "They's a big fire over at the shops. I'm going to run over and see if I can help any. Can't run any risks of letting it get out of control you know. It might get over into the town."

Without waiting for her reply he opened the door and plunged outside. Jamming his hat tight on his head and ducking into the blast he ran down the front walk and out the front gate.

As he struggled through the drifts toward the shops, the glow grew brighter. He came to the edge of the roundhouse yards. Over the top of a line of coal cars darting flicks of flame became visible, apparently coming from the machine shop.

The line of coal cars blocked the way and Shadow was forced to climb between them or make a long detour aound the end. He chose to climb. Such was his haste that he struck his knee on the coupler cut lever as he clambered through. The pain was intense, but he dropped to the ground on the other side and continued without stopping, limping as he ran. He crossed the last line of tracks, ran under the coal tipple and burst out by the fire.

It was as he had thought.

The machine shop, a great brick-walled building, holding the machine and carpenter shops, was in flames.

Shadow was at the rear, behind a small building, or rather vault of brick, which had been added to the machine shop the year

before to conform with new state laws relative to the storage of oils and other explosives.

The walls of the building were of brick. The fire was inside. Many of the tall windows filling the brick walls were broken and vomiting smoke and bursts of sparks. The entrance was on the other side, and Shadow hastened there.

He found a motley crowd at the front of the machine shop. There were half-naked boilermakers, fresh from the sweltering fireboxes of hot engines, machinists bundled in greasy clothes, engineers and firemen, some of whom had been asleep in the bunk room and had dashed out into the night half dressed at the first alarm. And there were several men, clean and well clothed against the storm, who had just reported for work.

Kent, the four to twelve foreman, was in charge. He had managed to have a hose run from a near-by fire plug and several men were directing the stream of water through one of the front windows.

The one stream was of little effect against the fire. The floor of the machine shop was of wood. There were wooden racks and benches scattered all about. In one corner a two-storied tool-room and office was constructed of wood. At the other end of the building was the carpenter shop. It was filled with wooden benches, piles of shavings and wood scraps and large racks of wood. Everything was soaked with the oil and grease drippings of years.

Both ends of the building were afire. The floor of the machine shop, the wooden tool-room and the office above it were covered with licking flames. The racks of wood in the carpenter sections were blazing and the wooden roof overhead was afire. The entire inside of the huge building was a mass of smoke, sparks and crackling flames.

Kent, seeing that one stream was having little effect on the fire, turned to the men who clustered about the entrance.

"Let's get some more hose," he shouted. "There's some in the roundhouse. Come on!"

A dozen men followed him, and Shadow was at their head. His thin frame was once more shaking from the cold, his feet were numb, his hands so chilled that they hurt. But the fire of his loyalty to the road blazed high within him and he felt nothing. His hand closed on the end of the reel of hose just behind Kent's. Still limping from the blow on his knee, panting heavily from his exertions, he followed Kent back to the fire with the end of the hose. Kent stopped at the plug to which the other hose was attached. On the plug was a pipe for another hose.

There was a wrench hanging from the plug by a chain. Kent seized it and hurriedly unscrewed the cap over the second pipe. It came off, and the cold water burst forth. Shadow, who knelt before it with the end of the hose, was drenched. Kent had forgotten to shut the water off while the new hose was being attached.

Shadow leaped to one side with a howl. But in spite of his quick move he was soaked.

"—— it!" he cried, dancing around with chattering teeth, "whyn't you watch what you are doing? Gimme that wrench!"

He seized the wrench from Kent's fingers and shut the water off.

There was no time to argue. As soon as the stream slackened Kent jammed the end of the new hose on the pipe and screwed the coupling tight.

Still swearing through chattering teeth, Shadow reached down, gave it the last few turns with the wrench he held and then turned the water on once more.

THE limp hose stiffened and straightened like an angry snake as the water rushed through it. One man held the nozzle of the new hose, and he grasped it carelessly. When the water reached the nozzle it flicked from the man's hands and writhed furiously over the ground, showering water on all sides.

The men scattered from the cold stream.

Shadow, wet, freezing in the icy wind, saw the nozzle flick from the man's grasp and go free. He saw the men run from the flying water. At the sight his feelings boiled over.

"—— it!" he shouted again. "Ain't anybody got any sense?"

He charged along the line of hose, butted a man out of the way and cast himself full upon the writhing end.

He came up in a minute, gasping, spluttering, every inch of his body soaked and dripping, but with the nozzle under control. He wrestled with it in a mounting anger.

"Come here!" he bellowed at the men. "Give a hand! Are you afraid?"

Seeing the water under control several men rushed forward and helped to hold the nozzle. Shadow led them forward until

they were standing in the doorway of the burning building. The heat from the inside was uncomfortable and the swirling clouds of smoke surrounded them. The man next to Shadow shrank back and began to cough from the smoke.

"It's hot," he choked.

Shadow grinned at him.

"Hot, is it?" he howled. "And so's another place. You might as well get used to it."

He deliberately took another step forward.

The gale whipped through the broken windows and fanned the flames until their crackling and popping arose to a roar. The whole roof was aflame, and long trails of sparks swirled out on the skirts of the gale until they became lost in the driving snow and the night.

In such wise were things when Blanton, the master mechanic, arrived. He had gone home at five o'clock, and it had taken him some time to retun from the far side of Rawlings.

The Rawlings volunteer fire department also had appeared on the scene. They could do little. Their machine was stalled in the drifts on the outskirts of the yards and there was no way to get it across the maze of tracks which surrounded the shop buildings. But they began to bring their hose and do what they could.

Blanton, with Kent, came up beside Shadow and surveyed the burning interior of the building. Blanton shook his head.

"It can't be put out," he said to Kent. "About all that we can do is see that it doesn't spread to any of the other buildings. The roof is on fire and a lot of sparks will soon be flying."

Kent nodded.

"We'd better get the two lines of hose playing on the roof."

"That's best," Blanton agreed.

He turned and then stopped as a little man elbowed his way hurriedly through the onlookers and stepped up to him.

It was Jones, the head storekeeper, and he was plainly excited. He pointed into the machine shop.

"The door—" he asked Blanton—"was the fire door to the oil room closed?"

"Did you leave it open?" Blanton demanded.

Jones gulped.

"Part way," he admitted. "I meant to return and didn't bother to close it all the way. Something else came up and I went home and forgot about it until I saw the machine shop was on fire."

Blanton clutched Kent by the arm.

"Was the fire door to the oil room shut after four o'clock?" he demanded.

"Fire door?" Kent started and his face paled.

"Yes, fire door! The storekeeper says it was open part way when he left at four o'clock."

Kent shook his head.

"I wasn't near it, and I don't think any one else was either."

The storekeeper turned a frightened glance on the burning interior.

"There were five boxes of dynamite put in there day before yesterday for the construction gang. And a couple of boxes of caps with them," he shrilled. "And the whole room is stacked with drums of kerosene and paint and oil. There's a lot of box packing there, also. It's liable to blow up any minute!"

He gave another look at the fire and turned and scuttled away.

Shadow and the two men who were helping him hold the nozzle heard the excited declaration of the storekeeper. The man across from Shadow, the machinist who had complained about the heat, paled.

"Didja hear that?" he asked hoarsely.

Shadow nodded and swerved the stream of water over to that part of the rear wall where the fire door was located.

"Looks like we got to keep plenty of water where that door is," he answered coolly.

"Plenty of water!" The machinist snorted. "I'm going to put plenty of space between me and the whole dern building."

He let go of the nozzle and emulated the example of the storekeeper. His companion, without saying a word, followed him.

Shadow wrestled with the squirming hose and swore mightily.

"Yellow!" he bawled to the world in general. "Everybody's yellow! C'mere, —— it! Give me a lift!"

The man he shouted at was Blanton, who was nearest him.

BLANTON heard him, looked, recognized him and, seeing the situation, sprang from Kent's side and grasped the handle of the nozzle. Kent joined him.

Neither Blanton nor Kent made any

reference to Shadow's incongruous actions. Blanton peered into the fire again and then looked at Kent and at Shadow.

"That door's got to be closed," he stated grimly.

Kent shook his head.

"It's too late now. There isn't an opening in the oil room, except some slits along the top of the wall for ventilation. The only way to reach the door is through the shop here. It can't be done now."

Blanton set his jaw.

"I think I can get to it," he said. "It isn't very far to the door. Most of the fire is at the ends. Right through the middle here it's just smoke."

"You'll never make it," insisted Kent. "Why, we can't even see half way to the back wall through the smoke. We'd better warn every one to get out of the way. It's liable to blow up any minute."

"I'm going to try," declared Blanton stubbornly. "If that room blows up it will damage the coal tipple and the roundhouse. Our main line service will be interrupted. We can't have that. If I can close that fire door the machine shop will burn out harmlessly."

Before Kent could remonstrate further, Blanton stripped off his heavy overcoat, wet it in the stream of water and, holding it before him, plunged into the burning building.

"It's suicide," Kent cried, almost tearfully. "The man's crazy! He'll never get out alive."

Shadow gave him a sour glance.

"It's murder to wet a man on a night like this," he observed. "Why shouldn't he try to shut the door? He'll save the company lots of money if he does."

"The company? What's the company beside a man's life?" demanded Kent excitedly.

Shadow squinted into the burning interior.

"Shut up," he ordered gruffly. "We gotta keep some water about where he is. He'll make it if we keep him wet."

He raked the stream over the area between the entrance and the place where the fire door was located.

But though Shadow spoke confidently, Kent's words soon began to bear the stamp of truth. Blanton should have made the trip in a minute, two minutes at most. One minute, two minutes, three minutes they stood gazing intently into the smoke, watching for Blanton to reappear.

Kent shook his head.

"He's never coming back," he said despairingly. "He's somewhere in there burning up right now. I said it was suicide."

"Shut that —— blubbering up!" snapped Shadow savagely.

He looked around. They were alone. The news that the building might blow up any minute had spread and every one had retired to a safe distance. The men on the other hose line had pulled it back with them until the stream barely reached the walls of the machine shop.

Shadow's lip curled and his faded blue eyes squinted in contempt.

"Yellow!" he grated. "Every one afraid of his skin. They wouldn't lift a finger for the company that keeps 'em alive."

"Burning," muttered Kent, and his voice barely carried over the crackling of the fire.

Shadow shivered, but it was from the cold gale playing over his wet form, not from fright. He felt strangely light headed. Kent seemed to have receded a trifle, and when Shadow glared at him, he seemed to quiver as a shadow does on moving curtains.

"Well," said Shadow loudly, "if he's burning, we'll go in and get him and put him out!"

"You're crazy!" cried Kent. "We'll wait another minute and then we'll get back from here. He was told not to go in. We've done all we can."

"Have we?" asked Shadow, and his throat felt dry and he could hardly speak.

"Yes!" insisted Kent. "Come on, let's go back."

He pulled at the nozzle.

"No!" said Shadow jerking at it.

He shivered and, in the next instant, was burning with heat.

"Come on," said Kent roughly.

He pulled at the hose harder.

"No!" said Shadow, and his voice broke and rose to a scream as his self-control snapped. "—— you! If you're afraid, get out! I'm going in and get him and close that door!"

He let loose of the nozzle and, without stopping to see what Kent did with it, took a deep breath and plunged into the billowing clouds of smoke and heat that swirled out of the door.

It was hot inside, hot as a great oven. Shadow felt as if he were burning up, outside and inside. His eyes were irritated by the smoke and so filled with tears that they were useless. He rubbed at them with the back of his hand, held on to the breath of pure air he had taken outside and pressed ahead.

The machine shop was over a hundred feet deep—a hundred feet of heat, of smoke, of sparks and embers from overhead, a hundred feet of hell.

A BLAZING ember from the burning roof dropped on the back of Shadow's outstretched hand. It seared deep before he shook it off. Another struck his sleeve and only the wetting Kent had given him saved him from catching afire.

Suddenly his outstretched hand touched something hard and hot, but not the brick of the rear wall. It was a great driving wheel lathe. He remembered it as resting to the left of the oil-room door and some twenty feet in front of it.

His need for another breath became imperative. His heart pounded. His lungs were red hot, bursting. He could stand it no longer. He exhaled with a whistling rush.

And then real torture began. What he gulped into his empty lungs was not air. Rather fiery gas, biting smoke. He coughed, choked, gulped again and doggedly held to the right for four paces. That, he reckoned, put him almost straight in front of the fire door.

Blanton must be found. He had seen nothing of the master mechanic. But he might have passed within three feet of the man and not seen him. Blanton might be burning, even as Kent had said. The oil-soaked floor was blazing in many spots.

But the fire door came first. With it opened only a heavy wire door remained between the contents of the oil room and the fire. One-inch mesh was that wire, nothing at all to keep out the drifting sparks, the licking flames that crept nearer and nearer. Yes, close the door and then look for Blanton. Small satisfaction in searching for him and then getting blasted out of life after he was found.

Thinking so Shadow held straight ahead with a rush.

His foot stubbed into something soft. He tripped and sprawled over an inert body. It was Blanton, slumped, twisted, dead—perhaps.

Shadow, as he groped to his knees, blinded by the smoke, found that which had felled Blanton. It was a heavy block, part of a block and fall that had been suspended above and in front of the oil-room door to load and unload drums of oil from the hand-trucks on which they were transported from the loading platform at the end of the building.

The rope with which the top block had been secured had been reached by the fire. It had burned through and the block had dropped on Blanton's head. Shadow's fingers were burned by the smoldering rope ends on the block even as he felt of it.

Dead. Blanton was dead. They would both be dead soon. Shadow's lungs burned, tightened. He felt weak, helpless, slipping. Air. If he could have one breath of pure air! And as he knelt to feel of Blanton's heart he found life for them both.

Blanton's heart beat—slowly, but he lived. And along the floor flowed a current of breathable air. Shadow drew it into his tortured lungs. It gave him new life and courage. He thought of the door. It must be near. Leaving Blanton for the moment he stood up and went forward.

Within three paces he reached the back wall. It was brick he touched, and he needed the door, the wire door. He felt to the left, found nothing and, following a sudden conviction, lunged to the right. His scorched fingers touched wire—painfully hot wire. And to the right still farther he found the handle of the fire door. He pulled and the door moved.

Before he closed the fire door tightly Shadow peered into the oil room for signs of fire. He saw nothing. The drifting sparks had not found their mark as yet. With a heave he closed the door and latched it tight.

Safe. There would be no explosion on the D. & R. that night. Kent had said it couldn't be done. It had. But there was Blanton, and the journey back to the entrance of the burning building. The sparks were raining down faster. The crackling of the fire was getting louder. The heat of the blazes closing in from both ends of the building was more intense.

Shadow turned back and found Blanton. The master mechanic still lay inert. He was burning, even as Kent had said. His

clothes smoldered in a dozen places from the falling embers. Shadow beat at them with his hands. But the cloth was hard to put out and he made little progress. He gave it up. They would have to reach the outside quickly or they would never get there.

He put his face close to the floor and gulped the air again and again. A final deep breath and he got to his feet and grasped Blanton by the shoulders.

Blanton was large and heavy. Shadow was tall and slim and slight. The huge master mechanic was a heavy burden for him at any time. Weakened as Shadow was, it was almost too much for him. He strained and lifted and pulled. Blanton's body stirred, moved and dragged along the floor.

Thus they made the front entrance.

Not in one grand rush. Not in one final sweep to victory. Rather in small stretches, with intervals for Shadow to get life from near the floor, with spaces for Shadow to beat at the rain of embers which was falling faster on both of them.

Once a creeping stream of flame barred their progress. Shadow had to pull mightily to get Blanton through before his clothes caught fire in earnest. Once there was an ominous crackling from overhead. Shadow's heart sank, for it seemed apparent that the roof was caving in. But he held on. A draft of cold air struck him. A blast of icy water beat upon his back. Pulling Blanton after him he staggered backward into the open, and the fury of the gale enfolded them with an icy mantle.

Then there was no lack of men to run forward, to congratulate Shadow, to drag them back from the building as the roof caved in with a mighty crash and a shower of sparks and flame, to carry Blanton to his warm office, to catch Shadow Macgillicuddy as he fainted, to call a doctor for them both.

DAYS later Shadow came back from the spaces where he had wandered, weak, delirious, unconscious, a visitor at the borderline of life and death. Pneumonia had claimed him, and his thin, scrawny frame had offered little resistance. He was a true shadow, a human shadow when he opened his sunken, faded blue eyes and gazed sanely upon the world.

He was in a strange world, a quiet world—quiet and dim and peaceful. Yes, peaceful and restful, but strange. The wall-paper on the ceiling and side walls was strange, the pictures on the wall, the bed, even the quiet and peacefulness were strange. There never was much quiet where the twelve Macgillicuddy children lived.

The sound of a distant chime whistle floated into the room, and a lump came into Shadow's throat. He was near the railroad, near home—home and his twelve children and their mother.

Twelve children and their mother, and jobless. He was jobless, he knew. No need to speculate about that. Gatz would not hold the job open for a day. How long he had been away he did not know. It was long enough to lose the job. He sensed that.

Shadow closed his eyes and lay quiet for some time. Finally hot tears oozed out from between his closed lids. Fourteen mouths to feed, and he had no job. They were probably hungry. The tears came faster.

Of a sudden a gruff voice beside him asked—

"What's the matter with you now?"

Shadow turned his head and opened his eyes. Leaning in a doorway, close to the bed, was Blanton, a wan Blanton, a Blanton with his head all wrapped in bandages.

Blanton looked at Shadow sternly.

Somehow, in a way, it seemed natural for Blanton to be there. Shadow looked at him in silence. Finally he asked—

"Where am I?"

"My house," said Blanton gruffly. "There wasn't room at your house for a sick man, so they brought you here. Anything else you want to know?"

There was.

"Gatz," said Shadow heavily, "I suppose he's fired me?"

"Yes," said Blanton. "I told him to."

Shadow swallowed.

"My kids," he said painfully. "They'll starve. Gatz was the only man with work."

"Bosh," said Blanton roughly. "What do you care about that piddling job? You've got a good job on the railroad. Now that you've got a yard engine to run you ought to be satisfied."

He added somewhat unnecessarily:

"Ryan was in this morning to see how you are. He comes around almost every day to ask about you."

Shadow's thin hands clenched under the

covers, and he swallowed again. And the tears came again in spite of himself.

"It's a good world," he said, and choked and managed to grin.

Blanton's eyes crinkled and moistened and he nodded.

"It is a good world," he agreed. "A great world if you make it so."

A FILIBUSTERING VETERAN

by Eugene Cunningham

THE original filibusters of William Walker had an allegiance for their chief which was not always shared by later arrivals. In the last gloomy days of Walker's Republic of Nicaragua, when his force was hemmed in at Rivas by the allied armies of Central America, Walker's chiefest enemy, President Mora of Costa Rica, hit upon the effective plan of promising amnesty to any Walker man who would desert, with free passport out of Central America. So many of the newcomers took advantage of the offer that the morale of the army was seriously impaired and Walker finally announced that any who desired to leave his service might do so, openly. La Falange Americana—the American Phalanx—was drawn up and the quitters ordered to stand out. Says Scroggs:

"Only five men availed themselves of this opportunity and as they left the town they were hissed and hooted as long as they were in hearing. The courage of one of these failed him and he turned back, but Walker compelled him to go on."

From Louis Jack Rogers, the illustrator, comes the tale of a meeting of his father, Colonel W. K. Rogers, Walker's commissary-general, with an old man on the streets of Oakland, a half-century after Walker surrendered to Commander Davis, U. S. Navy.

Colonel Rogers was hobbling along, with the aid of his heavy cane, when he noticed that another oldster on the opposite sidewalk was staring at him intently. The other old man crossed over and called Colonel Rogers by name:

"I'm surely glad to meet you again, Colonel, after all these years," he said. "Why, you remember me. Of course you do! I was in Rivas with you in '57, just before Walker surrendered to the Costa Ricans!"

Colonel Rogers stared hard at him for a moment, casting back over the half-century. Suddenly he emitted a roar that fairly shook the cupola on Oakland City Hall.

"Why, you blankety-blanked deserter!" he bellowed. "*Remember* you! You're one of the illegitimates that hadn't the guts to stick to us when we were up against it! Walker didn't surrender to the Costa Ricans—if you'd stuck around with us, you'd know that. He surrendered to the United States Navy. *You* have the nerve to come up and speak to a *man!*"

And the Oaklanders, therewith, were treated to the spectacle of a huge, bearded old man, madly pursuing a slighter, but equally old, fugitive, up and down the street, Colonel Rogers brandishing his cane and roaring epithets. It was the old colonel's regret in those last years of his, that once again the variously qualified deserter's legs "were longer, faster, than an honest man's."

A SUSPENDED SENTENCE

A Complete Novelette

By Lyman Bryson

Author of "Crawdads," "At Dutchy's," etc.

OLAF HANSEN, master of the Siamese steamer, *Petchabouri*, led a casual passenger into his cabin on the after-deck with the air of sharing grave secrets.

"I will show you a picture," he said. "Sit down there."

He pointed to a stool and took his own position on the edge of his bunk. The passenger, a thick-set, bored-looking English trader from Singapore, obeyed. There was nothing else to do. The *Petchabouri* offered no amusements and there were no other passengers, except for a huddle of variegated natives on the deck. The ship was a few hundred tons of transportation machinery, nothing more; so the Englishman was willing to indulge the master's desire for conversation.

"I will show you a picture," Captain Hansen repeated, and took from the shelf below his shaving-mirror a frame of twisted brass.

The Englishman accepted it with listless fingers and gazed at an old-fashioned photograph of a sturdy woman, seated on a chair, with each arm thrown around a child. They were both little girls, those children—dressed in the quaint stiffness of Danish village fashion, staring out of the frame with round, solemn, unreal eyes.

"My wife," said Hansen, "and my two daughters. The oldest one is sixteen now."

"Umm-mh, yes," answered the passenger, feeling that something had to be said. "Yes—very nice indeed."

Hansen took the frame and restored it to its place. It had been holding down several sheets of note-paper and he arranged them carefully as they had been before. On the top sheet were written the last words of a sentence in Danish—

"—yes, I am sure we can buy the farm from Cousin Knute, when the time comes."

It was a sultry night, and Captain Hansen had removed his coat, disclosing that he wore no shirt. His bare, red, hairy arms, extending from the armholes of his singlet, were crossed loosely on his chest.

"I have been out here fifteen years now," he confided with the same red-faced, conscientious solemnity. "The pay is very good and I have my share of the profits. Steamer belongs to a Bangkok crowd, you know. It has been hard to stay so long away from my family. Sometimes it is two or three years between visits, sometimes longer. But in three years more I will have enough to settle down."

He spoke with dry, prosy exactness, in spite of the dreamy abstraction on his face. He seemed not to hear what his visitor murmured in answer. His pale blue eyes, under the reddish shelf of his thick brows, were turned toward the floor—toward a spot between his square-toed shoes where he saw the vision of a little farm on a Danish hillside, with his sad wife and his two children, growing now into womanhood. He sighed.

"I have an absolutely priceless helper," he added. "My Malay, you know. Couldn't

"A Suspended Sentence," copyright, 1926, by Lyman Bryson.

get on without him. His name is Pata, something like Peter. I call him Peter about half the time. He's invaluable, absolutely. In fact—" he looked at his visitor suddenly with profound emphasis—"I have made a white man out of Pata. He would do anything I asked him to do—anything."

The *Petchabouri* was ploughing heavily through the starless, cloud-hung night, northward toward Penang. In the midst of the heavy blackness of water and sky, it moved as if weighted down by the threatening thick air. Its decks were darkened and the native passengers were gone to their uncomfortable beds. The light streaming from the cabin lamp seemed to be intimidated by the blackness that ate its ruddy edges at the door. The murmur of voices along the bed-strewn forward deck had died down completely. The only sound was a husky exchange of low talk, somewhere near.

That talk rose abruptly into the vehemence of argument and Captain Hansen recognized the voice of his *serang*, the indispensable Pata. It had no relation to the dream of a farm in Denmark and he did not listen. Pata was quite capable of handling unaided any brief dispute with a deck passenger, or a member of the crew. In the still air the smells of the ship clung to her decks, mingled with a faintly sickish odor from the galley, where the cook, evidently, was having his evening pipe.

The captain lifted his head when one of the disputing voices rose suddenly in a shrill scream. It was not very loud, rather like the squeak of a frightened small beast. Cloth-shod feet ran toward them. Just beyond the edge of their light they heard a quick scuffle, a blow and heavy breathing.

"Bless my soul!" cried the passenger, rising and peering out. The pattering feet started away again; there was another cry muffled in a struggle and then, breaking softly through the velvet blackness, came the sound of a splash.

After that the night's silence closed down about them. Captain Hansen, running forward, saw a man against the rail who stared out over the water. It was Pata, the Malay, the indispensable assistant to the captain's plans.

He was clad only in the trousers of a pajama suit and his brown chest, powerful and glistening, was pushed hard against the rail as if the breaths wrenched out of him in agonizing gasps were the blows of an attack to be resisted desperately. His broad, even-featured face, that bore usually a submissive quietness, was twisted in a snarl and his teeth were flashing in the dim light.

"Pata!" cried the master of the *Petchabouri*, "are you hurt?"

"No, Master," answered the Malay.

"Then what—"

Pata lifted his bare arm and pointed into the blackness over the water.

"A man's gone overboard," said the passenger in a frightened whisper and the captain turned to wake up his crew.

"NO USE, Master," protested the Malay, in brief English phrases. "Too later. Gone now."

He looked appealingly toward his captain, watching the expression on his face.

"Only a Chinaman," he explained in a pleading, conciliatory tone.

The passenger was appalled, but he nodded as if that were enough to explain sudden murder.

"Good night, sir," said the captain. "I hope I will see you at breakfast."

Thus dismissed and too astonished to reply, the Englishman went quietly to his stateroom. Everything was quiet on the steamer. The night continued to open before them like a liquid blackness and close again behind, silent and oppressive enough to enforce silence on the world. Except for the dismissed Englishman, no one on board seemed to be awake, or in the least interested in that brief event. No cry for help came from the sea behind them.

Captain Hansen led his Malay, out of whom he "had made a white man," back into the light of the cabin, under the stiff, impersonal stares of the Danish woman and the two little girls who still kept guard over the sheets of the letter where was scrawled the promise of comfort and peace—on Cousin Knute's little farm.

"Now, Pata," he began, in a voice of business-like remonstrance, "Now—"

"Master!" The *serang* spread out his hands in a wide gesture and then burst into a soft passionate torrent of pleading in his own tongue. It was not an accident. He had struck and the Chinaman was crazy with fear and jumped. He had meant to strike, to kill perhaps.

"Now, Pata!" The pale blue eyes of his

captain watched him steadily under contracted reddish brows.

The Malay lifted his hands fiercely.

"To kill!" he repeated. Then he was silent and passive, waiting for reproof.

The Danish skipper pressed his lips firmly together.

"Murder," he said gently, "on my ship." He addressed a question to the world at large, shut off by the curtain of blackness. "Why? Why?"

Pata regarded him curiously and, returning to his incoherent, passionate story, named a name. Never before had he spoken the name of a woman to his master. He was respectful. Fifteen years of companionship, of the closest association in peril and enterprise, had never tempted him to break down his decent reticence. The name of his wife was his own business. This Chinaman, this Sing Koo, he said, had once by accident seen her face. Sing Koo was a greedy wretch and a powerful trader in spite of the fact that he kept riches and power concealed under a cheap black jacket, and rode as a deck passenger. He had offered to buy her, dangling before Pata's somber fury such terribly tempting sums that Pata was horrified with the thought that he might some day yield and give up the woman he loved.

"But you are my partner, Pata," protested Hansen. "You share with me. You don't need money. If our luck holds for three years—but now, of course—" he sighed and breathed the word again under his breath—"murder—"

Sing Koo had ceased to tempt with money, Pata said. He had begun a steady persecution. When Pata was out on the steamer, as he was for weeks at a time, his home was watched and vague threats kept his household in terror. For this trip, Sing Koo had come aboard as a passenger, unnoticed among the others when they left Singapore. Tonight, he had crept up beside Pata and begun to whisper. He was no longer interested in buying the woman outright. He had succeeded in bribing her, he insinuated, and she was no longer Pata's to sell.

The distracted Malay had driven him into the sea.

"No man could do less," he protested, finally, letting his chin fall upon his bare chest.

"No, perhaps not," answered Hansen but he glared at the silent, submissive figure before him. "But," he demanded, in a hoarse voice, instinctively lowered so no one outside could hear, "what am *I* to do? If I report this, I lose your help and without you—"

He extended his great red hand as if to put it on the Malay's shoulder but withheld that sign of affection and let his arm fall.

"If I lose you, I'll not make it in three years. I won't be able to go home when I'd planned. Everything that I've counted on—"

He lapsed into silence. Out of that stealthy quiet, as they faced each other, he murmured once.

"Only that Englishman—he knows."

TWENTY-FOUR hours later, as the *Petchabouri* steamed into the harbor of Penang, Captain Hansen and the Malay stood side by side on its little bridge, watching the brilliant, flowered hills rise up behind the town. Neither of them had spoken since of the only thing they had been able to think about. On the smooth face of the Malay there was no sign of conscious guilt. He was waiting, troubled only by his master's disquiet.

The passengers got ready to file off. The Englishman walked up to the captain without offering to shake hands and remarked—

"I shall be here in Penang for a month." He looked immovably upright. "You can let me know at the Occidental Hotel when you need me for a witness. In the meantime, I shall say nothing, sir, nothing at all."

He nodded solemnly and walked off the ship.

No one else asked any questions. If, among the riff-raff of the decks, there were friends of the Chinaman who had been dropped overboard in the strait, they gave no sign. Captain Hansen watched them go ashore, carrying their bundles, chattering in seven languages, losing themselves in the dock-side crowds. Then, without a word to Pata, who knew perfectly what needed to be done with ship and cargo, he went ashore himself.

He frequented a club in Penang, coming and going with stiff dignity, but other members never got more than a nod from him. As he sat that evening, smoking his cigar and thinking, with knitted brows and pale

eyes fixed, a friendly hand fell on his shoulder. Behind him stood Marley, of the British steamer *Arethusa*, and Marley's clean-shaven, pinkish face was heavy with concern.

"I say, Hansen, I'm —— sorry to hear about your bad luck."

Hansen's cheeks flamed to the rims of his blue eyes but he gave no answer.

"Losing a passenger, one might almost say. Lucky for you it happened as it did. No responsibility at all, of course."

The master of the *Petchabouri* stared at him stupidly. This was incredible. Not a soul knew of that Chinaman's disappearance but Pata and himself and that one English passenger who had promised, on his own suggestion, not to say a word. A consuming rage against blabbing traders filled the captain's mind. With clenched fist he half rose from his chair.

The other sailor backed off a step.

"Sorry," he began, "I don't blame you for being a little touchy about it—an Englishman at that."

"—— all Englishmen!" growled Hansen. His blue eyes were protruding in exasperation and bewilderment.

"I know a man who saw the poor fellow," added Marley thoughtfully. "It was too bad."

Without a word of thanks for sympathy, Hansen walked away, leaving the good-natured Marley shaking his head over these evidences of nervousness. On board his own ship, Hansen was told that his English passenger, the thick-set, stolid-looking man who had been shown the picture of his wife and little girls, was now in the Penang mortuary—dead.

He had left something on the *Petchabouri* and hurried back to get it. He was in a fever of impatience and badgered a Penang boatman who was taking him out and back into a scared imbecility. The boatman blundered directly in the path of a tug and the Englishman, floundering in the water, was struck and crushed by the tug's propeller. It was a peculiar accident; nothing quite like it had ever happened before in that busy harbor. But it was not the peculiarity of the accident that made the brain of Olaf Hansen burn in his head for an hour after he heard the news.

At the end of that hour he called in his *serang*. The Malay approached with an air of conscious dependability. Behind him, Captain Hansen closed the cabin door.

"Pata," he said, "you're guilty of murder, do you realize that?"

Pata gave a slight start but did not answer.

"And now the only man who knows that you drove that Chinaman off our ship is dead—too."

The Malay nodded.

"You've been a good friend to me, Pata," said Hansen hurriedly. "You are a—you've acted like a white man. But I can't let friendship stand in the way of justice. It's my duty to turn you over to the authorities at once."

He brushed his forehead with pudgy fingers.

"You're a good friend—and besides that, you're my partner. If I lose you, I won't get finished out here in the next three years—no, not in the next five. I couldn't make any money breaking in somebody else. I simply can't do without you."

He got up and took two strides across, two strides back, on his narrow floor.

"And I won't!" he shouted suddenly as if Pata had been arguing with him. "I'm going to get enough money in the next three years to go back home and buy a farm, my cousin Knute's farm."

He pronounced that simple statement with an air of invincible determination.

"Do you know the penalty for murder?" he asked abruptly. "It's death. If I tell those fellows up there what only you and I know—you'll get hanged."

He put his hand on the passive Malay's shoulder.

"And I'm not going to do it—not yet. I'm going to give you three years of life, to work with me. After that you will have to take your medicine.

"I can't let friendship interfere with justice, you know. But I wish—"

He paused again. His self-control was leaving him and he shouted savagely—

"Get out of here. You understand now. You've got three years. But never speak to me about this business. Never!"

The indispensable Pata made a sign of obedience and slipped out of the cabin.

Left alone, again, Captain Hansen took the loose sheets of paper from under the picture of his family and finished his letter, repeating cheerfully at the end of the last page—

"And don't you worry, we'll buy that farm."

II

FOR months the two men on the *Petchabouri* went on with their laborious and profitable life, carrying on their trade, driving their little crew and pretending to each other that they had no secret. They had never talked much together; in his captain's presence Pata subdued his native loquacity. Their understanding was a matter of silent trust and professional efficiency. Pata, of course, was really much more than *serang* on that ship. He was partner, first officer, supercargo, confidential adviser and friend. He had a position which made it possible for him to talk to the scrubby little Scotch engineer as white men are not accustomed to being talked to by Malays. But in the face of Hansen he always had the manner of a faithful slave.

If their secret had begun to poison the captain's mind he gave no outward sign of it. His letters to the Siamese owners in Bangkok, the magnanimous men who appreciated him enough to allow him a share of the profits, were full of sturdy, prosaic optimism. His rare letters home were never about anything but plans for the future. Never a breath of the eastern world crept into those Danish phrases; not a suggestion of uncertainty, or of problems that might have shaken a man more given to questioning his own conduct.

Captain Hansen had made his decision with regard for his honor and the demands of justice. Pata was indispensable—for three years.

He never thought of putting any restraint upon the culprit he housed and protected aboard his ship. The *serang* came and went as he had before while the steamer visited little ports on both sides of the peninsula, from Singapore to Bangkok and back again; from Penang to Rangoon; from Malacca to Salangore. It made its small journeys and carried its picked-up cargoes and its indescribable passengers, piling up profits for the owners, with a share for Hansen and a smaller share for the *serang*.

The first break in the routine came at the suggestion of Pata himself. He was worried about his wife, he said. She was left there in Singapore, exposed to the revenge of Sing Koo's relatives—if contrary to all appearances anybody was mourning the lost Chinaman. Her mother was dead, added Pata casually. He wanted to bring her on board.

The master refused his consent to this unheard-of proposal at first, not because he cared, but rather because he had made up his mind that their secret should not be allowed to make the slightest difference in their lives. Afterwards he felt a twinge of pity and consented. There was the empty cabin that had been intended for a second officer. The *Petchabouri* had no officers. So Pata's woman came on board and was installed behind a swinging curtain, as secluded as she had been in Singapore.

Sometimes the captain saw her sitting of an evening in her doorway, drooping and silent, or he heard them talking together in low friendly murmurs. He did not, officially, know of her existence. He was not curious to see for himself the beauty which had lured Sing Koo into reckless extravagance and finally to his punishment. She had to assert herself against his solemn indifference.

IT WAS one night when the steamer lay in the roadstead off a little town on the east coast and Pata had gone ashore to chaffer final bargains with a grasping chief. The master was lying in his bunk with his coat off and his arms behind his head. His pipe had gone out in the intense absorption of his effort to bridge in imagination the distance between that remote, savage place and home.

She came in, noiselessly, looking with childish curiosity as much about the cabin as at him. She smiled faintly. When he spoke, she answered with interlaced fingers in a gesture of deep respect. Malay was not one of the languages that Hansen managed with greatest ease; with Pata he often used the pidgin-English that passes for a common tongue in eastern trading. But he knew enough to greet her politely and ask her if there was anything she wanted. He did not rise nor remove the pipe which stuck out from his set jaws.

"There is nothing that I want," she answered, "except to see you."

His pale eyes were unresponsive to this confession but the thought came to him for the first time.

"What does she know?"

"Why did you want to see me?" he asked.

"Because you are my master."

She leaned against the side of the doorway and her eyes wandered away from him again to roam about the tiny room. The brass picture-frame under the shaving-mirror caught her attention and the faint smile returned to her lips.

Captain Hansen sat up.

"I am nothing of the kind," he said. "What ever gave you that idea? Pata shares in the trading—"

"It is not that," she insisted. "It has nothing to do with the ship, or the trading. You, O white man, you are my master."

"Look here, now," began the captain, flushing in discomfort. "I don't want you to talk to me like that." He saw the smile on her face deepen and he raised his voice. "Do you understand?"

She made a gesture of obedience but her smile did not change.

"Do you know why you are on board this ship?" The prosy brutality of his manner was a sharp contrast to her seductive gentleness but a futile weapon against it.

"No, Master."

"Do you know what happened to Sing Koo?"

"I know only that he is gone now." There was no sign of fear or satisfaction on her face. She only continued to smile.

"And do you know what—" Captain Hansen checked himself.

After all, if she did not know the terms on which her husband was working out his term of three years, it wouldn't do to give her hints by asking leading questions. Hansen's ruddy face was contracted in a painful frown and a dew of intense discomfort showed on his forehead.

"I know only that Pata made a mistake to bring me on this ship," said the girl, with gentle brazenness, "on this ship where you are master."

"What do you mean?" Hansen rolled off his bunk and took a threatening step toward her. "Have I ever come near you? Have I acted as if I knew you were on board? You're nothing to me. You're a piece of cargo." He sat down again with a decisive grunt.

She came farther into the little room and her eyes were fixed, not on him, but on the framed photograph under the mirror. She gave the stiff figures of Captain Hansen's wife and his two children a long derisive examination. With a startling suddenness in the midst of the silence, she broke into soft laughter. The sound stiffened Hansen as he sat on the edge of his bunk and a belligerent resentment came into his face. She did not glance at him again but went noiselessly away across the deck and disappeared into her own curtained quarters. Shortly afterward, Pata came aboard and the captain heard them talking together in quiet, good-humored intimacy. They were almost within ear-shot—almost within the reach of his hands, he was thinking, as his puzzled resentment grew on him.

After that, Pata's woman could not be "merely a piece of cargo" on the *Petchabouri*. The captain had less time for wondering why no relative or friend of Sing Koo had ever come to ask an explanation or had ever put the authorities on their trail. The dark thought that lay beneath his stolid manner and his steady, workmanlike devotion to the business of his ship was now the question of how much that girl might know. Was his honor exposed to her caprice? His honor and his plans? He had small respect for the faithfulness of a Malay, excepting Pata, of course.

Pata was altogether unique, the only Malay of his sort in devotion, submissiveness and business sense. If there had been another Malay like him in the world, he would long since have been surrendered to take his punishment for his crime. He was perfect and indispensable. This woman, however, was a different matter. Any tricky uncertainty was to be expected in her, any guile. If she knew the bargain, the three years' respite from punishment, a word from her at any time would put them in the hands of the police. That would mean a lot of trouble. It would put into a difficult future the purchase of Cousin Knute's little farm. It was an intolerable possibility—if she knew.

He failed completely in his effort to keep her out of his mind. He watched the swinging curtain over his shoulder furtively and when he retired to his own quarters he always closed the door, locked it in fact, for the first time in many years.

He felt more than puzzled hostility to Pata's woman. When the three years were up—and one year was almost gone now—that woman would lose her husband. She would be alone, on somebody's hands. A clammy dread fell on Captain Hansen. Would he be responsible for her future, for that impudent soft-voiced, smiling creature? She stood between him and the Danish farm, a warm

brown shadow obscuring the pleasant, cool light of northern peace.

Thus began the first prolonged uncertainty in the life of Olaf Hansen. It began after her first visit to his cabin and grew on him through the months of cool weather. It was kept up all during the monsoon rains by her repeated invasions of his solitude. He warned her not to come. He threatened to tell her husband. He locked his cabin whenever he was alone, even when he knew that Pata was watching his household. She laughed at those precautions. She could slip like a brown ghost across the little deck space and he would look up from his letter-writing, or his log, or come out of an absorbed study with a painful start, to find her standing there with a faint alluring smile.

What was he going to do with her? Could he desert her and let her be enslaved by somebody like the unspeakable Sing Koo? He asked her once if she had any one to protect her beside her husband and she answered,

"No relatives, now, and no friends but you, Master."

He asked himself with fierce repetitions if he was worried about her only because she was lovely and waylaid him shamelessly to make him look at her.

He was disturbed by the suspicion also that Pata was becoming less submissive and quiet, possibly even less efficient. The Malay made a serious mistake in his lists one day for the first time in their long association with each other. When the master asked him about it he was sullen.

"Now, Pata," protested Hansen, kindly. But he got only a surly stare for an answer.

Alone in his cabin that night, lying back in his bunk and staring up at the lamp, Captain Hansen went methodically over the events of the day. When he came to recollect the change in the manner of his *serang* he muttered to himself with gloomy apprehension—

"He knows she comes in here, he must know."

With a snort of anger he sprang to his feet and unlocked his door. He wanted to get outside for a breath of air. They were steaming south from Tringanu through a night that blazed with stars. In the deep softness of the sky the constellations swung their lamps of bright, cold fire. They were festooned in the black water that churned from the sides of the *Petchabouri*, and long ripples of phosphoresence were comets among their broken patterns. The captain took a deep breath and gave the magnificent night a brief glance. It had no weather signs in it, to be sure; nor any answers to plaguing questions. It was only a night full of mysterious burning beauty—a night of vast astronomic dramas, and the ship was a speck that ruffled up the mirror in whose eye they were enacted. A night of no importance whatever. Hansen shook his head fiercely as if to shake it empty of troubles and turned back. By his door he saw Pata's woman crouching, at the edge of the light that came across the deck.

He seized her by the arm and dragged her in and slammed his door to behind her.

"You silly little fool," he scolded, "you're doing nothing but starting trouble here. If I ever catch you around this side of the ship again, I'll—I'll put you ashore. D'y' hear?"

She made no effort to meet his glaring eyes.

"Next time—you go ashore." He dropped her arm. "Get out," he commanded and turned away from her.

He heard her soft steps following him. She reached up and took the picture of his wife and two daughters and stood for a moment holding that picture beside her own face so he could see the life and light in her mobile loveliness beside the stiff unreality of those three solemn faces. He reached toward her with so threatening a gesture that she dropped the picture and fled. The glass was shattered on his floor. He plunged to the doorway, but the deck he glared across was already empty and the curtain on the other side swayed slowly in the wind. He thought he saw his *serang* by the rail a few yards away, watching silently.

III

CARRYING deck passengers was always part of the business of the *Petchabouri*. Out of their small fares came some of the profits of brief journeys up and down the parallel shores. Such passengers are not carefully scrutinized before they are accepted; it is quite understood that they should be queer. They shift for themselves, finding a corner to sleep in, and buying a little hot rice occasionally from the ship's cook to eke

out whatever provisions they may be carrying. On the little Siamese steamer they were never numerous, although they seemed so, jamming the tiny forward spaces with chatter and quarrels and miscellaneous filth. There were always Chinamen.

After nearly two years, Captain Hansen had ceased to mistrust every chance Chinaman as a possible avenger of Sing Koo. No matter how voluble and friendly, no matter how sinister, they were only more passengers, more natives of the weird world wherein he moved, indifferent to everything but his accumulating treasure—and his honor.

He picked up a group of them at a little port on the east coast one morning; traders, they said they were, on the way to Bangkok. Otherwise on that journey the decks were clear. These four squatted in a circle forward and were quiet except for an occasional burst of jibbering monosyllables arising out of their incessant gambling.

The steamer put in at Tringanu as usual and Pata went ashore, taking several members of the crew. The master was working with his papers, trusting—without giving it a thought—to the *serang's* shrewdness for those deals with the villagers of the coast.

He heard a sound that he had almost forgotten, a soft step across his threshold. As he turned the door closed behind the girl. She was not smiling. Her eyes were wide with fear and her white teeth were bared as she gasped for breath.

"Master—" she whispered.

"I've told you—" began Hansen.

"No, no," she protested. "The Chinamen—they are in my cabin—they came for me—"

"Nonsense! On my ship? They wouldn't dare."

But there was the sincerity of terror in her face and he went past her to the deck. He saw a figure slink along the rail, away from her swinging curtain. His thick figure bent like a spring and in two leaps he caught the fugitive. It was a Chinese, as she had said, a slender creature who made no outcry in Hansen's cruel grip. He was dragged to the master's cabin. The girl was gone.

Hansen threw his prisoner on the floor, where he drew himself together like an insect and waited.

"Do you speak English?" The man on the floor shuddered.

"I'll take it for granted you do, you dirty pirate," said Hansen. "If you don't understand anything else I can talk to you with my fists. I'm going to turn you over to the police in Bangkok for bringing your tricks on board my ship. D' you understand that?"

He bent menacingly over the black insect coiling at his feet.

The Chinese suddenly straightened and looked up. He opened his snarling lips and answered.

"Me no think you will." Then he shrank again as if a blow was the only thing he feared.

Captain Hansen seemed capable for the moment of showering him with blows. He stood over him with swinging fists, his pale eyes terribly ablaze.

"You think I won't, do you? Who asked you to think?"

"You do not bring any Chinaman to see police," answered his prisoner, trying to cringe into a smaller space. "If you bring Chinaman there, maybe Chinaman say something and police maybe ask you—what about Sing Koo? What about Sing Koo?"

Hansen leaped backward as if the coiled insect had struck at him. The prisoner rose to his hands and knees and Hansen made no move to hold him when he scuttled toward the door and, looking back, whispered the horrible question—

"What about Sing Koo?"

The master of the *Petchabouri* sat down weakly. Pata found him there an hour later, his hands loose on his knees and his eyes fixed on the wall. When the Malay spoke to him deferentially he turned a dull, tired face, which looked as if a flame of passion, of remorse, of dark and tangled dread, had burned it to an ash.

"They know," he said, in a voice of astonishing prosy casualness, coming from that stricken mouth. "They've known all the time."

"Who knows, Master?"

"They—those Chinamen. One of them threatened me tonight with telling. We are in their hands."

Pata took a step nearer and bent his head close.

"It is always better to kill, Master," he suggested, simply. Getting no answer he murmured confidentially, "There are only four Chinamen on board, now."

Hansen was silent, lost in empty terrible speculations, and the Malay turned toward the door with a movement of decision.

But the captain called after him—

"Where are you going?"

"To do what is necessary."

His master came to life.

"What do you mean, you bloody-minded brute? Can't you ever understand? Haven't you understood what I've said to you? You're a murderer now; you're guilty, self-confessed, and it's my duty—clear as daylight—to turn you over to the police. And I've told you that I'm going to do it. Me—your master, your friend. I'm going to betray you when our time is up. I mean what I say, —— you. When our three years are up you have got to take your medicine."

He let his head droop again and muttered in despair—

"If they don't come and ask for you before we can get through, you've got to take your punishment, my friend."

When the four Chinamen were allowed to leave the steamer at Bangkok, the Malay watched them go with an expression of sharp discontent. His master noted that surprizing change; he tried to talk Pata out of his black mood but his own words were almost incoherent. He babbled of unrelated things, a farm in Denmark, three years' share of profits, something he called "his honor." None of these had any bearing on the fact that four enemies were getting away. Pata's submissiveness evidently did not go the length of letting them depart with a cheerful face.

There was no reasonable explanation for the fact that those Chinamen, knowing that Sing Koo had been driven off the *Petchabouri* by the wrath of a murderously resentful husband, had done nothing about it, although nearly two years had gone by. They had watched, evidently; the movements of Captain Hansen and the Malay had all been under their concealed observation, but they had never moved and never blabbed. It was mysterious and more menacing than an open-handed effort at revenge. Pata did not bother his head about it, but his master, who was also his unhappy jailer, brooded and pondered on that threatening quiet.

AFTER they had got well out from Bangkok on their next journey south, Captain Hansen called Pata into his room one afternoon and in spite of the sweltering heat, received his assistant in his coat, buttoned up tightly to his chin. He had the air of being about to do something official. His thick figure was erect and he kept his feet as the silent Malay approached. His round cap was on his head, his hands were clasped behind his back and his blue eyes were fixed in a pained but inflexible stare.

"Now, Pata," he began, "once I told you never to speak to me again about what happened—about that matter of Sing Koo. You've been very decent about it, and I appreciate the way you've acted. But I have not changed my mind nor my program."

He waited to see if the Malay would make any sign to show that he felt the significance of that sincerity, of that suspended betrayal. Pata was entirely impassive, listening carefully, as if anxious to get all the information that might be offered him but waiting chiefly for the orders which would come at the end of his strange master's strange speech.

"Since those Chinamen—that last bunch—were on board and it has been plain that they knew, it has been rather hard to figure out just what to do about this business. I can't very well turn you over to the police now. It would only delay matters and they'd get everything all mixed up and—well, I just can't do it—that's all. And besides, whenever I turn you over, I realize now, that I'll have to answer questions as to why I've kept you here all this time."

He was preposterously solemn and judge-like. It would have looked like the pronouncement of sentence in a court except for Pata's air of being concerned with a trivial matter of routine duty.

"And I've decided," said Hansen in a husky, worried voice, "that this business has got to remain a matter between me and you. I am bound by my word, by my honor—" he paused and blinked—"to see that you are punished for your crime. But since things are as they are, I don't see but one way out of it. When the time comes you will have to punish yourself. Now do you understand?"

"Yes, Master," answered the Malay, from force of habit.

There was no sternness left in the captain's face. He was only solemn and regretful.

"Punish yourself with the—the usual punishment. That's death."

He breathed the last words harshly. The incredible calmness of his proposal made his

voice seem to come from him without meaning, an impersonal automatic sound. He leaned toward Pata, trying to read the secret of that inscrutable acquiescence. He almost wished for some sort of protest, some savage rebellion that would prove at least that the proposal was understood.

"I thought," he went on, mumbling helplessly, "that nobody knew anything at all about it—that nobody would suppose I was protecting you all this time. And then when I finally did bring you in, I could say that I'd only just then found out about it." He waited again. The Malay blinked slowly and listened.

"I thought nobody knew I was protecting you. Now, of course, those Chinamen know and they can go to the police any time. We'll just have to try to bluff through the few months we've got left. Whatever reason they have got for keeping quiet up to now may go on keeping them quiet." He speculated for a moment and murmured, "Whatever it is.

"We'll bluff it through. If at any time they do go to the police, Pata—then the game will be up and you'll have to disappear at once—at once."

He was looking at Pata again with that same calm manner of saying something sad but quite reasonable.

"I mean you'll have to do away with yourself then—immediately. If we do succeed in bluffing it out, Pata, we'll keep our first bargain. But you'll have to do exactly what I ask you to do, whatever happens. You understand me now, don't you?" He concluded on a note of forgiving friendliness.

The Malay lifted his velvety eyes and frowned slightly.

"If I go away at the end of our time, Master, what will you do with all my money?"

"Your money? What do I know about that? I'll give it to you and you'll leave it for somebody. That's nothing to me—you'll leave it to your woman, I suppose."

The Malay gave his master a long stare, full of a desperate inquiry. He was searching evidently for some clear human purpose behind the white man's rigamarole of talk about honor and promises and punishments. He adopted his natural remedy for the situation. He nodded and was dismissed, putting aside all this to be explained later when his master began talking straight again—like a man.

Left alone, Captain Hansen tore off his stiff jacket and threw himself back on his bed. It was horrible, this silent submission which seemed to come from an inhuman indifference or else from a complete failure to comprehend very ordinary words. He was not a vindictive man. His slow, pacific mind had no interest in punishment for its own sake. He suffered in the grip of his own formula. This business had to be taken care of in the proper way. He was only faintly conscious of the absurdity of the application he was making of his formula of justice. He did not doubt for an instant that his Malay, his invaluable friend, would be faithful, even if the captain put a *kriss* into the obedient brown hand and commanded him to plunge it into his own breast. Pata was like that.

IV

IN THE last few months, as they approached the allotted term, the shadows of the final necessary disaster were heavy on the *Petchabouri*. It would have been a time of strong and conflicting emotions for Captain Hansen if there had been nothing but the conclusion of his foreign service to be faced. He was going home. His life's effort, his eighteen years of queer trading in a strange, hot sea, was nearly over and the reward, a stony hillside and three strange cold women, faced him for the remainder of his days.

Pata did his work with the same silent, efficient, unmatched skill. The curtain swung, impenetrable and mysterious, between the rest of the ship and the quarters into which he retreated at night. Once Captain Hansen, tramping the deck in a maelstrom of emotions, troubled and almost afraid of his own determinations, heard the murmur behind that curtain rise into an excited, high-pitched intensity. Without thinking he paused along the rail and tried to hear. It was her voice, mainly, in passionate complaint, but he could not follow the swiftly screamed words. He blushed with the realization that he was eavesdropping and walked forward on tiptoe.

He hated Pata, in that instant, for being so calm and so inaccessible in his submissive, obedient silence. Why should he, the innocent Hansen, be the one who trembled? He had been living for months under the strain of a constant apprehension. He had

rehearsed a hundred times the surprized, indignant answers he would give to the port police if they asked him questions about Sing Koo. He had never heard of such a Chinaman. Lost from on board his ship? Certainly not, sir. Quite impossible! And in the meantime he would be looking for a chance to whisper to Pata, the unique and indispensable friend—

"Now, Pata, time's up."

The last trip was, naturally, back to Bangkok. Hansen was going there to turn his ship over to the owners and collect his last precious pay and find a passage home. He completed arrangements for that voyage with studied casualness, taking thought about the difficult business of acting precisely as he would have done under ordinary circumstances, when the circumstances were in truth charged with strange possibilities.

ONCE under weigh, he changed his habit of lying in his bunk, thinking hard with a painful frown while he stared at the roof timbers. He shut himself in and paced, two steps forward, two steps back, in that narrow space and talked in a rambling way to nobody at all.

"He's my best friend," he would mumble in despair. "And I'm the one who made a white man out of him. Then that —— Chinaman, that Sing Koo—"

He remembered the night, nearly three years ago, when Sing Koo splashed into the waters of the strait as an event now dim, far off, and unreal. That violence had become an idea, a moral fact rather than physical.

"But it was murder and I have promised myself— After all it was murder and a man's honor—" It would come to him with a pang of appreciation that Pata had never in eighteen years refused to do with astonishing skill whatever he was bid. He always obeyed an order with unquestioning trust and marvelous efficiency. Those eighteen years were probably half of Pata's life, the half that had made him almost a white man and Hansen's perfect slave. He would do what he was told— Oh, yes. He'd get into a little boat alone, and pull away from the steamer in the darkness, and out there in the open sea he would inflict on himself the last terrible thing that must be done to a murderer. Malays did not commit suicide. This was something different; this was retribution, and obedience to the end.

Afterward Olaf Hansen, his conscience appeased, having laid the unworthy ghost of Sing Koo, could take passage home and buy Cousin Knute's little farm and peacefully work out his old age.

In his restless pacing he stopped and one big, red fist went uncertainly up toward his chin.

"Then there will be that woman—"

Probably she would make a fuss for a day or two, crying and wailing around the ship. She would have to be put off somewhere and left to take care of herself. She would have plenty of money, however. Hansen did not believe she would grieve for long. She would be shocked; but she would find somebody else. The money would make that easy. The whole trouble had begun with her, anyway. She could stand it to suffer a little in the general disaster.

His imagination had been playing him strange tricks these last days. Trouble had made him fanciful and uneasy. He heard scratchings at his door, eerie, insistent sounds like the signal of a domestic animal in distress. He resolutely pretended not to hear them. He started at shadows which seemed to be forming themselves into a crouching figure. Dark eyes floated between him and the white, bare wall, eyes and the suggestion of a seductive, unfathomable smile. He exorcised those shadows by striding at them fiercely and they vanished before him. But they left him muttering.

He felt an inclusive hatred of all Chinamen. There were a few Chinese on board for that last trip, of course; they were part of the studied effect of a casual journey. There had nearly always been a few yellow faces, a few figures in black jackets and flapping black trousers about the decks. He kept his back turned on them for fear he would be tempted to spit in disgust. He hated all the East, the years of his servitude, the tangled savagery of those hot seas which had tainted him with connivance at a crime.

From all this he was going to turn away now, but as he turned in his pacings, wherever he looked, the sly intangible vision of a smile intruded itself, hanging in the air. It was the one thing he could not shake off and he suspected fearfully that it would hang before his eyes in the future, perhaps even in the cold misty air of home.

As the *Petchabouri* came lumbering up the east coast of the peninsula, Captain Hansen shut himself in his room for a whole day, pacing and muttering. Pata, over whom hung the threat of a white man's cold justice, ran the ship. In the evening, after the cook had brought in his supper and had departed in grave solicitude with an untouched tray, Hansen turned with an exclamation of startled anger toward the corner by the door. It was more than the ghost of a smile now: it was the clearly outlined form of Pata's woman, crouching in an attitude of supplication.

Hansen swore at this apparition under his breath.

"Will you get out, you —— thing?" he shouted. "Get out—it's not my fault! I can't help it!"

The presence was approaching him, on its knees, holding out lovely bare brown arms, pleading with him in a murmur that reached his ears like the voices in a dream.

"Get out, now." He summoned his strength and walked directly forward. His hand, extended before him, touched warm living flesh. "Master," said Pata's woman, at his feet. "Have mercy!" She writhed and pulled at his legs. He realized with a sick shudder that it was not a ghost. She was not smiling as the ghost had done.

He took hold of her wrists with a gruff "Come on out of this," and dragged her toward his door. She shook herself free and faced him.

"Pata tells me strange things," she said. "He has been faithful to you and you are casting him off. Why?"

"I can't explain it to you." Hansen was gruff and embarrassed. "Get out and don't ask questions."

"But Pata is—"

"Don't you think I know what Pata is?" he flared at her. "He's the best man of his blood that ever lived—maybe of any blood. I don't know another better. But he—it was all your fault, you she ——. You are the one to blame for his trouble."

She did not seem to be considering that accusation at all, although her eyes dilated instantaneously before she hurried into another plea.

"But you are strong and you can be merciful to him who is weak."

"He is my friend," answered Hansen. "But he is condemned justly. He is my friend but I can do nothing for him."

She stared at the set face of the white man and swayed toward the door.

"A white man," she flung at him, "does not know how to be a friend!" When he did not answer she made a sign of contempt. "Neither a friend nor an enemy," she said, and turned away from him, walking through his door into the darkness with superb repudiation.

When he was alone again the master of the *Petchabouri* rubbed his forehead with the back of his hand.

"That's all a show," he muttered. "She knows something and she's putting on a show to scare me out. I'm not scared." He repeated that comforting phrase to himself once or twice. "I'm not scared." He assured himself solemnly that he was not afraid, in spite of all the women in the world, to sentence his Malay friend to death for the sake of a drowned Chinaman.

Next day toward evening they sighted the light at the bar of the great Menam River and anchored to await the tide. It was almost midnight when the master called his *serang* into his cabin.

"Now, Pata," he began. The Malay's respectful, slightly anxious gravity appeared to fascinate him and he stopped. He shook his head and went on. "Now, Pata—time's up."

"Yes, Master," answered the Malay with soft readiness.

Captain Hansen issued his orders in a slightly thickened voice which he stopped twice to clear.

"You take that *kriss* of yours if you want it—" The Malay raised his eyes with a start but kept his pose of alert waiting—"and go jump off, somewhere aft." He repeated that absurd, unbelievable command. "And go jump off. Time's up. I am sailing for home as soon as I can get clear in Bangkok. Swim south, Pata, and curse me if you want to. Curse white men and justice and law and your master. D'y' understand? Then go find Sing Koo."

The Malay stepped silently out of the cabin. Hansen followed him. The anchored *Petchabouri* was quiet in the happy sleep of the last night of a voyage. The deck passengers had hushed their chattering an hour ago and were lying like bundles of old rags upon the planking. The water under the bows lapped with a languorous rhythm, and a little horned moon gave a faint light among the stars.

The master of the ship paused beside the door of Pata's cabin and waited until the *serang* came through the curtain. He saw that the *kriss* was stuck in the waist of Pata's sailor trousers. He listened for a moment. Not a sound came from behind the swinging curtain. He pulled the door to and locked it with his master-key. Then he sighed in a gusty puff and turned with a gesture toward Pata. The Malay was already at the rail.

His dark figure hung there for a moment like a winged creature poised for flight. He was looking out over the water, not toward the little rocky islands which might have offered a precarious refuge, but southward into the illimitable dark expanse of the sea. Once he lifted both arms straight above his head. His leg was thrown up over the rail.

A SHRIEK cut into the air, thin and piercing, almost from under the captain's feet. He jumped aside. Pata's woman was there, not locked in her cabin as he thought. She was screaming like a mad woman and Pata was frozen on his perch. Hansen tried to seize her and clap his hand over her face but she clawed and shrieked until the whole ship was brought shuddering out of sleep. A light appeared in the galley. The forms of deck passengers began to rise among the murky shadows forward like the dead from their graves.

"Be still, you fiend!" commanded Hansen but he could not gag her.

"Why?" she was crying, "Why? Why?"

Hansen let his arms fall. Even the incredibly obedient Pata might reply to that question now. There seemed to be no way to stop this woman's mad grief and he might answer. Very well. Let him. His answer will go ringing up the ship and all the crew now hurrying aft and that little crowd of scared passengers, and the Chinamen, too, will hear the truth. Hansen waited.

There was a moment of absolute silence on the little deck while Pata's woman lay at Hansen's feet and Pata hung above the rail looking back at her.

In a clear voice, solemnly, as if called upon in a supreme moment to tell the truth, Pata said—

"My master has cast me off—to my death—because he wants you."

The crew did not make a sound and for a moment Hansen was dumb. When his voice came it was out of a strangling tightness in his throat.

"No!" he shouted.

"No, Pata! I forbid you to move. That's a lie!" He went on, speaking to Pata as if no one else could hear them. "I know it has been hard for you to see through this business and to know just—just what I am trying to do. But that is an absolute lie. I have never looked at her—"

The woman wriggled to her feet and stood with her tear-streaked face close under his.

"It is you that lie," she said. "You that are powerful lie to get what you want. False to your friend and liar—you!"

It was a cry of grief and rage, but a cry also that inflicted a revenge. There was a devilish satisfaction in her eyes as she saw the white man wince. She screamed until her voice went echoing over the quiet waters:

"Liar! Liar! Liar!"

The crowd was pressing close around them now, hanging appalled on this swift exchange of accusations.

"You—you—" Hansen choked.

All he had suffered and labored for was lost—his honor, his plans, his future on a cool, safe hillside, everything.

"You—"

Then there was a laugh. It was a light, ironic, contented laugh like the amusement of a demon turning a damned sinner on a spit. It came from the little group of passengers, from among the Chinamen.

Pata's woman leaped away from the captain like a cat at that sound. The knot of people scattered as she came among them but she saw the man who laughed and she hissed once, fiercely—

"Sing Koo!"

"Sing Koo? Sing Koo?" repeated Hansen stupidly.

He walked after her and the passengers shrank before him. The girl was facing one who stood backed against the wall, still laughing with uncontrolled but gentle, devilish mirth. She pointed as if her finger had been a knife.

"Sing Koo," she said with absolute conviction.

"Are you Sing Koo?" asked Hansen, still in a stupor of surprize. "Alive?"

The Chinaman laughed on. He had never before enjoyed such a joke, such a tremendous joke. His gurgling, sardonic mirth was the only sound except for a buzz of amazement among the crew.

"And alive? Not drowned?" Hansen peered, trying to recognize a wandering, laughing ghost.

Sing Koo nodded slightly.

His gurgling laugh choked in his throat when the master of the *Petchabouri* picked him up by the arms. He cried out once in alarm, but Hansen took three steps to the rail and heaved him with a sulfurous curse into the sea. He curved through the air in a grotesque whirl of thin legs and arms, striking the water with a slap and a drowned yell of fear.

HANSEN turned and without looking at crew or passengers, at Pata by the rail or at the girl, walked into his own cabin and shut the door. For an hour they thought he must have gone mad.

Before they listened, however, to the smashings, the curses, the hideous blasphemies that were coming from the interior of the captain's room, they saw Pata walk slowly across the deck. For a moment he stood looking down at the water where Sing Koo could be made out, threshing in terror. The efficiency of the perfect sailor, the obvious rule of duty, controlled him. He went over the rail and with the same submissive quiet skill that he had always shown, he had the honor of pulling Sing Koo out of the gulf and flinging him, draggled but unhurt, down upon the deck. Then he waited quietly for further orders.

It sounded as if there might never again be any orders from his master. The ravings continued from the captain. When they quieted down in weariness, Pata knocked softly. He received a growling command to go away.

The Chinaman, like a half-drowned kitten, lay on the deck just outside the captain's door and shivered.

Captain Hansen was unaware of that. He was not in the least concerned now with the question of Sing Koo. That Chinaman, who had been on his mind for the last three years as a wraith of blood guiltiness, could be alive or dead. He did not care. His Malay was freed of responsibility.

Pata, listening patiently outside, could hear only faint sounds. It was slightly ominous to have such silence after so much noisy wrath. He had no reason for alarm, however. Captain Hansen was sitting at his desk before the cracked picture of his wife and daughters. The only visible sign of the agitation through which he had just passed was that he streamed with sweat. The sweatiness of his eyelids and fingers bothered him somewhat as he scribbled an address on a large envelope.

WITH a cleared mind he was sending off his last letter home, reassuring them for the hundredth and last time that he was well, that everything was all right, that he was coming home to buy that little farm from Cousin Knute and spend the rest of his life with them in peace.

KANAKA ENGINEERING

by J. D. Newsome

IN BYGONE days the natives of New Caledonia displayed an astonishing knowledge of engineering.

Because the valleys where they lived were too narrow to support a growing population, they carved the sides of the hills into great terraces. These were carefully graded so that mountain streams could be made to flow smoothly along each terrace and down to the next in zigzags each half a mile or more long. If there was no spring on the hillside they brought water from neighboring slopes along viaducts made of hollowed-out tree-trunks. They gaged levels with a nicety modern engineers might envy.

Few of these terraced hillsides are cultivated today. The white man has changed all that.

The native population is decreasing, the survivors are apathetic and indolent; they work on plantations or cattle ranches, and on Sundays they get drunk when they are not attending church.

WHEN BILLY THE KID RIDES AGAIN

by

S Omar Barker

IGH are the mountains and low is the plain,
Where Billy the Kid comes riding again.

Old Júanico sees him, black, black on the moon,
And two phantom horsemen come following soon.

Now topping the ridges, now hid in the vale,
Four pale ghostly riders press close on his trail.

No thudding of hoofbeats, no sound in the wind—
Nine silent dead men are racing behind.

Beyond the old court-house and following fast,
The tenth pale pursuer springs out of the past.

Fort Sumner to White Oaks, Tularosa to Bent—
Gaunt horsemen await him at each settlement.

Old Júanico sees them—no other eyes can—
The galloping Kid and his strange caravan.

For blood's in the moon-mist as two dozen dead
Swoop down the dim trails where their killer has fled.

Gray in the mountains and white on the plain,
At moon-haunted midnight they're riding again.

Time shadows the silence in old Lincoln Town—
Look! Billy the Kid comes galloping down!

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PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

The Goodly Company Of Adventurers

By Post Sargent

Author of "The Admirable Crichton," "Captain John Smith," etc.

AFTER several abortive attempts—historians and statesmen refer to them as *coups d'état*—he became President of France, then Emperor of the French in 1852. History now names him Napoleon III, and has further dubbed him "Enigma."

A Liberal, he strove to reestablish royal prerogatives and his own right to the throne of France. A prince, he intrigued and fought for constitutional liberty in the ranks of an Italian secret society of patriots—the Carbonari. Silent, even taciturn, at times verbose; grave and serious, yet of strangely winning face and personality; drifter and opportunist, it seemed, but holding tenaciously to one purpose; without extraordinary talents, yet giving sudden flashes of uncommon genius; successful in his purpose in middle age, though a failure at both ends of life; a disappointing yet dominating figure that shrinks in the frame of success, and looms large against the background of failure.

If Enigma be his cognomen, prince and emperor his titles, surely his middle name should be Paradox.

Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had for uncle Napoleon I, "the Great," for which reason the nephew is sometimes referred to in scorn as "Napoleon the Little." His father, Louis Bonaparte, a man of secluded habits, fond of retirement and study, was for a time King of Holland; at a time when most of the great states and back-yard principalities of Europe seemed to be run on the chain-store system, and under the firm name of "Bonaparte Bros., Ltd." So Prince Louis Napoleon came honestly by his ambitions.

When Napoleon the Great was wrecked at Waterloo in 1815, Prince Louis Napoleon had reached the age of seven. Five years before, his father, tired of domestic squabbles with his queen, Hortense, and weary of the carping criticism and interference of his domineering brother, rid himself by one bold stroke of both wife and kingdom.

Overnight he abdicated the throne of Holland and abandoned his wife, betaking himself with speed befitting the occasion to a town near Dresden. There he busied himself among his beloved books and in discussions held with Goethe on literature. His hasty departure was so little regretted that Queen Hortense became quickly consoled—without public scandal; and Napoleon I allowed his erring brother a pension of two million francs.

After Waterloo came Napoleon's sojourn and lonely death on St Helena in 1821. Then arose the Napoleonic legend, that strange canonizing of the dead military despot as the champion of nationalities, the hero of oppressed peoples. In Austria, Napoleon's young son, Napoleon II—who

never reigned—died in 1832, a virtual prisoner of his grandfather at the Court of Vienna. A pathetic story, wonderfully told in Rostand's drama, "L'Aiglon."

Meantime Louis Philippe had been elected to the throne of France, after the revolution of 1830. The dynasty of the Bonapartes that Napoleon had striven so hard to found and impose on France—and Europe—seemed to be at an end.

But the Napoleonic Idea had not died. One Bonaparte, of the many brothers and nephews and grandsons, maintained the doctrine that the Bonapartist line was the legitimate choice of the people for the throne of France, and was destined to return to power to make France supreme again, according to the political ideals attributed to the great founder of the family.

Imbued with this ideal, or political ambition, Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte—who would, I think, have preferred to come peacefully to the throne, to govern as a liberal philosopher—Prince Louis Napoleon started on his adventures.

Up to the age of twenty-two the young prince, in banishment like the rest of his family, lived with his mother in Switzerland, at the château of Arenenberg overlooking Lake Constance. Gentle, brooding, studious, he attracted no attention from the world. Yet all the time he seems to have had dreams of future greatness, and to have understood instinctively that a knowledge of military affairs would be necessary to him for the realization of his still vague ambitions.

He served as an artillery volunteer in a Swiss camp. Then came the French revolution of 1830 that aroused similar movements in many other countries. With his elder brother, Louis Napoleon hastened to Italy to join the ranks of the revolters in Romagna. When the insurrection was put down by Austrian troops, the two lads were in great danger. The elder died of wounds. Hortense, the former queen, setting out bravely from Switzerland in an attempt to save her sons, rescued Louis Napoleon in dramatic fashion. Concealing him in a house at Ancona during his severe illness, she later whisked him through the Austrian lines disguised as her coachman.

To Paris, to England, and then back to Arenenberg, where he remained for several years in comparative quiet, studying and writing on political subjects.

Slowly the germ of the Napoleonic Idea was sprouting in his mind. Suddenly the tree of desire and ambition burgeoned and seemed to offer fruit. It seemed to the young dreamer that France called to him to take his uncle's place. With hurried preparations, secretly, in 1836, he hastened to Strasbourg, where he had some reason to expect that the garrison would rise in revolt at his call.

An act from opera-bouffe! A regiment did respond to the magic name of Napoleon. A Colonel Vaudrey joined the futile rebellion. But other regiments and officers came tumbling, yawning, from their warm barracks into the night and surrounded the rebels. Without a shot being fired, the conspirators were arrested and, at the end of a few days, the would-be emperor was posting under guard to Paris.*

Ten years later, in 1846, on the eve of his spectacular escape from prison, Louis Napoleon wrote a statement (for the press?) that never reached its destination, but found its way, by devious channels, after three-quarters of a century, into the writer's hands. It is intended, doubtless, to prepare the public mind for a new venture on the part of the pretender to the throne. It is entitled:

AUTHENTIC RELATION OF MY CONNECTION WITH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT FROM 1836 TO 1840.

My attempt at revolution having failed at Strasbourg, the 30th of October, 1836, I was incarcerated in the prison of the city. The 9th of November, at eight o'clock in the evening, M. Lebel, director of the prison, came and asked me to go out with him. I found at the bottom of the stairs General Noirol and the prefect of the Bas Rhin, who made me climb into a carriage, without explaining to me the reason for this nocturnal abduction. I begged them urgently to leave me in the same place that my companions in misfortune occupied; they replied to me by a kindly refusal. . . .

Arriving at Paris at two in the morning, I found M. Delessert, Prefect of Police . . . who addressed me as follows:

"The king gives you full and plenary pardon."

"Sir," I replied, "I am extremely moved by the intentions of the king with respect to myself, but I would prefer before everything else to be judged, to share the lot of my friends and, moreover, I have important depositions to make in their favor which might influence the jury . . ."

"All that you can tell me," replied the prefect, "can not change your destiny which is irrevocably decided upon. You are going to set out again in

*The writer has before him, as he writes, unpublished letters and a long manuscript in the handwriting of the future Napoleon III, concerning this and subsequent events. Several excerpts are here published for the first time, for the readers of *Adventure*, adding somewhat to our knowledge of this royal adventure. Translation made from the French.

two hours, a frigate is waiting for you at Lorient to take you to New York."

Protesting that he wished to remain to die with his fellow conspirators, if need be, refusing to make any pledges for the future —so he writes—he is hurried aboard the French man-of-war. Instead of making for New York, "I was kept prisoner on board, even in the roadstead of Rio de Janeiro, and was set at liberty only at the end of four months and a half of navigation."

After a short stay in the United States, where he received a cordial welcome, he returned to Switzerland, being forced to evade all the diplomats and secret police of Europe to reach his sick mother. At her death, the French government demanded his expulsion from Switzerland. When Switzerland declined to expel him and France began to threaten, Louis Napoleon voluntarily fled to England, to save further difficulties for his Swiss friends.

AGAIN, in 1840, after several years' residence in London, he made another attempt upon the government of Louis Philippe. Again a fiasco! Ludicrous, without doubt, because it failed. Comic opera, were it not for the calm, patient persistence of this young man who believed in his own great destiny. Had he not written:

I felt myself henceforth free from any obligation towards the French government, and at liberty to stake my head anew as best it would seem to me.

Tried by the Chamber of Peers, Prince Louis Napoleon was condemned to life imprisonment in the castle of Ham. He was then thirty-two years of age.*

For six dreary years he endured rather stoically the tedium of life in the barred rooms and the walled courtyard of a gloomy provincial castle. An occasional friend to lighten the tedium, but everywhere sentries and guards to keep him under surveillance in every act of study, and exercise, and authorship.

Undismayed by his failures, he seemed to feel the certainty of ultimate success in his purpose. Articles and letters came from his pen, exhorting his followers to renewed efforts. The adventurer, from his prison cell, taught diplomacy and shrewd politics to his friends of the outside world. He even began a "History of Artillery" that was never finished.

Then came a day, when the old ex-King of Holland lay dying in Florence. Whether through ruse or filial love, Louis Napoleon requested through his friends permission to go to receive his father's last blessing. He promised Louis Philippe, in the event his request was granted, to pass one year in Florence; then to take ship for America and there to remain for life.

Have it understood that the pledge I propose to take is the most serious and most explicit of all, and that truly if they refuse me, it is because they wish to kill me. . . . I ask to go to pass a year at Florence, engaging myself thence to pass to America.

Thus he wrote to the above-mentioned Poggioli, the 15th of April, 1846. Did he mean it? The government of Louis Philippe refused his request. A month later—Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte takes his place with Monte-Cristo of fiction, with Hugo Grotius of true life!

The citadel of Ham was all that a prison should be, considered from the point of view of the jailer. High ramparts, with four round towers at the corners, enclosing the group of buildings and the courtyard. Encircling the south and east walls was the St. Quentin canal. The west wall faced the town and was reached by a moat and drawbridge. One of the two brick buildings in the center of the yard served as a barrack; at one end was the prison occupied by Louis Napoleon—two barred rooms on the ground floor.

Although strictly guarded as a serious menace to the State, Louis Napoleon was given many privileges, in respect of visitors and communication with the outside world. One of his most intimate friends, his physician and fellow adventurer, Dr. Conneau, occupied an adjoining room. To the latter, one day in May of 1846, he confided his purpose of making his escape, since he had long since lost hope that the government would ever consent to his release. Conneau tried to dissauade him. The prince was obstinate. His secret preparations went on.

Surrounded day and night by a company of soldiers and special guards, with no possible means of scaling the ramparts, or of crossing the canal and moat, Louis Napoleon was confronted with an impossible task.

*Before the writer is the original "pass," issued to one Monsieur Poggioli, "good for three visits" to Louis Napoleon. It is in the writing and on the letter-head of the Minister of the Interior. The date is July 12, 1845, five years after the incarceration of Louis Napoleon.

But those qualities that were to make him emperor came to the fore: persistence, the ability peculiar to opportunists of instinctively "seizing the psychological moment," the courage of the stubborn. The drive of ambition!

Convention and experience have decreed that night is the proper time for all good escapes. Louis Napoleon decided to make his departure in broad daylight. I strongly suspect that he had one eye on his escape; the other on the gallery—the French public. There is little doubt in my mind that, had the prince settled in the United States and become a native of New York, he would have been a shrewd politician. His abilities were lost on a monarchy.

Repairs were being made to the château of Ham. A number of workmen were passing in and out of the citadel. The commandant of the castle was no fool: strict surveillance was kept of all these goings and comings. Inspection was made of every workman entering or leaving the gate. Special orders were given to watch the prince, that he might not take advantage of some small opportunity to leave with a crowd of workmen.

But Demarle, the commandant, became indisposed in the latter days of May. Instead of rising at daybreak, as was his custom, to attend personally at the opening of the outer gate, he would arrive at the late hour of seven. The sad eyes of Prince Louis Napoleon took in the situation.

Thélin, the valet of the prince, went to town by virtue of a pass, to make some purchases. The prince was in need of clothes. Upon his return it needed only a superficial examination of his packages to convince the guard that Thélin had truly visited the tailor.

On the morning of the 25th of May, Louis Napoleon arose early and—for the benefit of those interested in his boredom—yawned mightily, as a sign that this day was to be like all the others; a day of study and close confinement. Looking from his window, he could see, with jaded eye, the usual signs of his captivity—for life.

In the barrack sixty soldiers always under arms, with orders to shoot to kill at any signs of an attempt at rescue of their prisoner. In front of his threshold were three jailers, supported by a half-dozen sentinels who paced back and forth. On the ramparts a dozen sentries. Beyond, the courtyard, overlooked by the windows of the commandant's house. Still farther on, the gateway, with its wicket. A guard of thirty soldiers with a sergeant, a turnkey and several sentinels, kept watch over the gate.

A dreary prospect. Louis Napoleon stopped yawning. The sad eyes grew keen and hard. The mouth became determined. A glimpse of Napoleon III in his greater moments.

He returned to his bedroom. The hour was 6:30 A. M. Over his ordinary clothes he put a carpenter's costume, brought back the day before by Thélin: a pair of coarse trousers, a still coarser shirt, and over that a workingman's blue blouse. His face was pale and refined. A little rouge, a bit of smut coarsened his features. He cut off his mustache. He slipped on a pair of wooden sabots over his own shoes.

Into his pocket he dropped a poignard, having resolved to "kill himself rather than fall into the hands of his jailers and undergo the ridicule that attaches itself to those who are arrested in disguise."

In an outer room the faithful valet and friend, Thélin, kept a crew of workmen interested by treating them to a *goutte* or two—a nip of cordial.

Putting a pipe in his mouth and hoisting to his shoulder a plank laid down by a workman, Louis Napoleon descended the stairs to the yard. The plank served partially to cover his features. As he passed the room where Thélin was pouring from a bottle, one of the workmen called to him to step in and have a *petit verre*, a finger of the excellent cordial. The prince passed on with a grumble. Before him stretched the long courtyard.

An engineer and a contractor were standing in the center of the yard. Louis Napoleon had to pass close to them. One man looked up at the supposed workman, stared hard, then dropped his glance again.

The plank was heavy. Prince Louis Napoleon had doubtless, lacking practise in such work, failed to make the proper adjustment in the balance of the piece of timber. He dared not stop to get a firmer grip; he dared not even show awkwardness out of keeping with his part.

The plank was making history. This side the gate, a prince—prisoner for life! Beyond, Napoleon III, Emperor of the

French! And so the emperor trudged on.

But disaster almost overtook him. He dropped his pipe which broke in pieces. A prince would disregard such a trifling loss. A workman could not afford to do so. With painful effort, Louis Napoleon stooped—plank and all—retrieved the pieces of pipe and put them in his pocket.

He reached the gate. The sergeant and guard were lounging there; the sentinels paced back and forth, keeping a sharp watch for an escaping prince. Perhaps they expected that a prince would try to escape in a coach and four. The workman was not challenged.

He gained the drawbridge, passing an officer who was reading a letter. The officer may have gained a sweetheart by that letter, but he lost promotion. At the end of the drawbridge a porter, then another sentinel. Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was outside the walls!

He had taken but a few steps when he met two workmen. They looked hard at him and seemed about to speak. He lowered his head still more, grumbled to himself as if in ugly mood and passed on. One of the others turned and laughed.

"Oh, it's only Berthou," he remarked.

The two then entered the gate.

Meantime, Thélin had left his workmen to finish the bottle, had overtaken his master and had gone on to the town of St. Quentin. He returned in the course of half an hour with a carriage, to meet the prince, who had gladly discarded plank, trousers, blue blouse, and wooden sabots, making the necessary toilet in a ditch.

Reaching St. Quentin, Louis descended from the carriage and made the circuit of the town on foot. Thélin and carriage met him on the farther edge of the town, on the road that led to Valenciennes. At two o'clock in the afternoon they reached Valenciennes. For two hours two anxious travelers awaited the first train for Brussels; not courting attention, it may be believed.

Brussels was reached, then the harbor of Ostende, and finally the shores of England, twenty-four hours after Louis Napoleon had hoisted plank to his shoulder and set out on his escape.

In a published letter of Prince Louis Napoleon, wherein he gives a brief account of his escape, he pays a tribute to the devotion of his good friend, Dr. Conneau:

> During this time Conneau, always so devoted to me, remained in prison, and made believe that I was ill, in order to give me time to reach the frontier. I trust he will not be maltreated. It would be a great grief to me.

Conneau had placed a dummy of the prince in his bed. When the Commandant Demarle called to see the prisoner for the day, Conneau refused him admittance, asserting his rights as physician. A sentence of three months' imprisonment was the only punishment inflicted upon the courageous doctor for his part in the escape.

Of course there were accusations and counter-accusations and recriminations on the part of those officially responsible for the prince's safekeeping. But it is probable that his romantic escape did more to win public interest and favor than either of his futile attempts to seize the government. The general feeling of satisfaction was expressed by the phrase: *C'est bien joué*—He played a man's part. Louis Philippe was none too popular as ruler of the French. The populace realized that in Prince Louis Napoleon they possessed a man of the blood of the Little Corporal; one who might be counted on to continue the tradition of family and national glory.

The adventure won a throne.

In the February revolution of 1848, Louis Napoleon saw his chance and seized it. Louis Philippe had been overthrown. The Republic returned. Louis Napoleon became a candidate for the Chamber of Deputies and was elected. Or rather, without his candidacy, he was elected by the spontaneous vote of the people of three districts.

On September twenty-sixth he took his seat. In December he was elected President of France.

His power waxed. Behind him was the prestige of "the Man," that traditional Napoleon created by the imagination of the people. The Napoleonic Idea had crystallized and become incarnate in the nephew. And so, in 1851, he declared himself emperor and reigned for eighteen years, sometimes brilliantly, often badly.

Until the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Disaster for the arms of France—a new and final republic—a German prison for Louis Napoleon, *ci-devant* Napoleon III. Hence to England and death in 1873.

His life may be summed up in three words: ambition, cogitation, adventure!

RAMSDEN

A Five-Part Story—Part IV

By Talbot Mundy

Author of "Tros of Samothrace," "The Dancing Girl of Gades," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

RAIT and I were in Darjiling when I received a letter from one Elmer Rait, with whom I had been in partnership. He said that he was in Tibet looking for a place called Sham-bha-la, where there were ancient manuscripts beyond price; and begged me to come and help him. He said he thought he could get there, but was equally sure that he couldn't get back.

At the time, the Tibetan border was closed by both the British and the Tibetans, so we had to move carefully. We took the *babu* Chullunder Ghose, and picked up Narayan Singh, the fighting Sikh, at Delhi. Then we went to the house of Benjamin, who knew more about the East than any one we could think of.

Benjamin objected, but finally gave us letters which would take us through his secret route on our promise to look up his son-in-law, who was lost in Tibet.

He dyed my skin and Grim's, and we went forward. Two Tibetans, Tsang-Yang and Tsang-Mondrong, dogged our steps and we had to keep them with us so they wouldn't betray us. One of them had a wallet containing another plea for help from Rait, which he had stolen from the other. So, they made us safe—while fighting among themselves.

The message was in code embodied in a very personal letter a woman had written to Rait. It showed him up for the utter cad we already knew him to be.

When we were camped at the mouth of the Zogi-la pass Mordecai, Benjamin's son-in-law, came staggering in out of a blizzard with a horrible tale of his experiences among the Tibetan monks, and of the treachery of Rait who had betrayed him into their hands. He died the same night and we pushed on through the storm-bound pass to the town of Leh and the fortified house of Sidiki ben Mahommed, a friend of Mordecai's.

Here there came to us two visitors. The first was Lhatan, a quiet, forceful man with blue eyes and a ring that covered a whole joint of his finger. He warned us of the difficulty of entering Sham-bha-la, and gave much good advice mingled with cryptic utterances about the way we might or might not travel. He seemed to be "on the inside" of the mysterious forces of this mysterious country, and Sidiki ben Mahommed paid him great respect.

After he had gone, we heard a great commotion outside and found the two Tibetans, Tsang-Yang and Tsang-Mondrong, dead in the yard, with their noses and ears cut off. When we came back we found our second visitor.

He was a tall, strong-looking man with yellow eyes and a mass of black hair. His manner was insolent and he warned us against Lhatan. Also, he told us that he could help us rescue Rait, and in proof showed us a letter from my former partner saying that he was a prisoner and being tortured.

We tried to take the man with us, and he hypnotized Narayan Singh into putting away his gun, and by some equally strange trick, threw me into a corner.

Sidiki ben Mahommed was worried about the murders, so we started out again through the snow, and were hardly on our way before Sidiki's house, fired by his newest wife, burst into flames. Later, we were waylaid by thugs, and I lost so much blood in the encounter that I fainted and had to be carried.

WE STOPPED in a monastery perched on a cliff-top while I recovered my strength. The abbot discussed philosophy with Grim—calling him "son" and explaining about the "White Lodge" in Tibet, which studied the forces of life for good, and of the "Black Lodge" or *Dugpas* who studied the forces of life for evil. Lhatan came again and told us at length about the way to Sham-bha-la and the inner mysteries of the White Lodge, which he said affected humanity in a way much like that in which the discovery of electricity affects man's control of material forces.

Then Narayan Singh asked the abbot to show us a

Dugpa, and there came in one who looked like the man who had thrown me into a corner of Sidiki ben Mahommed's living-room. Narayan Singh killed him, and we were obliged to leave the monastery, the rules of which forbade bloodshed. I gave Sidiki ben Mahommed a money-order to cover his loss, and sent him back to Leh.

They let us down over the edge of the cliff in a huge basket, and on the journey to a cave-shelter in the mountains I nearly died of my wounds. When I came to, Lhatan's teacher—*guru*—was in the cave talking to Lhatan and Grim. He had saved my life by some mental physicianship known to himself. His name was Rao Singh and he was one of the most striking men I have ever seen. On his finger was the same sort of ring Lhatan wore. We talked more of Sham-bha-la and of the difficult road to it.

We went on, in our quest for Rait, over impossible trails of ice and snow a day's journey into the mountains. At night we were met by an old woman with muscles of steel who brought us down into an extensive cave. In an inner room—a room that was covered, walls, ceiling and floor, with an opalescent mineral deposit—a group of men sat about a fire, talking. They were students—*chelas*—with their *guru*, who greeted us courteously and told the woman to feed us. Later, Grim talked to the teacher of Rait and Sham-bha-la, and by his wisdom and steadfastness convinced the old man that we were worthy of help.

"YOU of the West are mechanical," said the father of conundrums. "You think in terms of engines. Very well. Let us say one of you wishes to solve a transportation problem. You desire to invent a machine that shall lesson distances. Yet you are ignorant. How long then would you think it reasonable first to study the mechanics of your problem—all the laws of friction, electricity, contraction and expansion, dynamics, metallurgy—and so on? Would you attempt to invent, let us say, an airplane without first studying those laws? And could you learn enough for a beginning, say, in half a lifetime? Nevertheless, you seem to expect me to explain in fifteen minutes how to avoid the malevolence of Dugpas, concerning which you are almost entirely ignorant, and how to—" he paused—"what else is it you wish to do?"

"To reach Sham-bha-la," said Grim, "after rescuing Rait."

"After doing the impossible, to reach a place whose very existence you can't prove, and concerning the nature of which you know nothing! All this you wish me to tell you in fifteen minutes."

Grim smiled.

"We have until morning," he suggested amiably.

He whom Grim had called the father of conundrums bowed ironically. Then he indicated with a gesture all those seated in a circle around the fire.

"These, too, seek what you seek," he remarked. "Observe them. Are they young? Observe her—" he signified the woman with a nod and a glance at her—"she was a married woman, mother of three children whom she raised to manhood. Then her husband died and she went forth as a *sanyassi*,* wandering all over India, seeking the way, for I forget how many years. Thereafter for what some would think a lifetime she endured austerities in a nunnery of which you have never heard. And now she has come this far, but no farther." His eyes swept the circle again as he paused. "Not one of these," he went on, "but has sought at least for twenty years what you are seeking. Thus far only, they have come. And I tell you, they will have to go forth and do what they know, before they can go one step farther. You believe I can instruct you fully before morning?"

"You can try," said Grim. "I think you can do more than you would like me to believe."

Chullunder Ghose, rocking himself with excitement, leaped at the breach that he thought Grim had made in the wall of obscurity:

"Surely you can do more! Let me see one evidence of power—great, wise *Gutu* that I know you are—and I will submit myself, performing all that is required!"

"You would reward me for an exhibition? Is that it? Do you think I wish to buy your submission?"

"Set me a test then! What shall I do to persuade you to accept me as your *chela?*" asked Chullunder Ghose. A sort of revivalist fervor had seized him.

"Serve those well in whose service you are!" was the answer, prompt and unequivocal.

The *babu* bowed his head and sighed like a punctured rubber tire. Grim, twitching his eyebrows, picked up the thread of his argument. He knew, as I confess I did not, something of what was required of him before he might expect plain answers to his questions.

*Wandering religious beggar.

"We are men who have no claims on us," he said, "and we are bent on a definite goal."

"Is it definite? How definite?" the other asked.

"This much," said Grim, "that we're willing to die if we fail. We're going forward. We intend to rescue Rait, and we intend to find Sham-bha-la. You—I don't know who you are—convince me, though I don't know how, that you can help us if you wish. You knew my name without my telling you. Therefore, I'm sure you've had word from Lhaten in some way, and that Lhaten told you all about us before we got here.

"It's also clear enough that you wished to see us; there was no need to admit us into this wonderful place. We should never have known of its existence unless the woman had brought us down here. I don't doubt that she did it by your orders. Either Lhaten, or else the more mysterious Rao Singh who came to the cave and cured my friend Ramsden, has told you we're fit to be trusted. It's as plain as this hand before my face that you can read me as I have often had to read the savages I've dealt with in the way of duty, only I don't doubt you do it better; probably incomparably better.

"Savages have often come to me and told me to do my duty and help them because I knew more than they did. I never refused, although I always helped them in my own way, which was frequently successful and occasionally not. I may seem like a savage to you, but you appear to me to know a great deal; and it doesn't make any difference to me how long this circle of *chelas* has been seeking what I only recently began to seek. I have been busy in my own way. So has Ramsden. So have Chullunder Ghose and Narayan Singh. They're friends of mine, and I don't pick friends at random. I can guarantee them. You may say we're just four savages who have reached this place together. And speaking as a savage, I say to you, 'Do your duty! You know what it is.'"

That was the longest speech I ever heard Grim make. Its effect was magical.

The "father of conundrums"—to this day I have not learned his name—stood up and bowed to Grim.

"I recognize you," he said simply.

All the *chelas* in the circle rose and looked at Grim with studied curiosity. Some of them smiled, but the majority received the news in silence. The old woman came and, thrusting herself between Grim and me put over his shoulders her own necklace made of dried red berries. Then she threw more fuel on the fire until the sparks rose in a shower to the roof and the whole cavern glistened and shimmered like mother-of-pearl in the dew of a midsummer morning.

CHAPTER XVI

JEFF RAMSDEN'S DREAM

EMOTIONS are not easy to explain in writing. Here in this draughty cave, where the paper flutters and the ink is freezing, even memory does not function properly. I have to keep warming my fingers by flapping my arms in the way the old London cabmen used to do on frosty mornings, and in the intervals it is not easy to recall sensations that occurred a month ago. So much has happened since.

I remember Grim's face. I remember that once, in Jerusalem, when a high commissioner had sent for him to thank him privately for secret public service that undoubtedly had saved the Near East from a holy war of Moslem against Jew and Christian, he had come out smiling in exactly the same way. Some one had touched the concealed, inner core of his manhood.

Now he stood still, looking straight into the eyes of the old *Guru*, whom he had called "father of conundrums." *Guru* is a desecrated word; I use it for lack of another to describe the man whose slowly spoken phrase, "I recognize you," opened a door, as it were, through which Grim stepped, and closed the same door in the faces of Narayan Singh, Chullunder Ghose and me.

We were the same men, standing on the same pearl-colored floor of stalagmite. No word, not a gesture of Grim's so much as hinted at a change in our relationship. The only way I can suggest the feeling I experienced is to say that it may be a woman, who sees a better looking woman speaking to her husband, feels as I did then. I don't know. But it may be.

Chullunder Ghose was jealous and gave tongue:

"Is it not enough that white men should have stolen India? Shall they rob us also

of our heritage in spiritual things? Why am I unrecognized?"

"You are better fitted to cheat pilgrims at Benares!" growled Narayan Singh.

"You—you will die with a sword in your back!" said the *babu*.

I expected anything to happen, except what actually did. The *chelas* formed a circle around Grim and the old *Guru*, excluding us three and the woman, who took me by the arm and fairly drove Chullunder Ghose along in front of her, he arguing like

a pot-bellied *bunnia* who has lost a lawsuit. Narayan Singh strode gloomily behind us, muttering to himself.

The woman led us up over the gallery into a dark cavern in which empty barley-bags and sheepskins had been piled for use as beds. She found an ordinary box of safety matches and lighted half a dozen butter-lamps in niches in the wall, which instantly brought great carved, staring, seated figures out of the surrounding gloom—solemn, serene and majestic, like a conference of prehistoric gods. It was hard to believe that they did not move and were not breathing. She set her box of matches on the lap of one of them.

It looked as if the chamber were prepared for us. There were three cups, three earthen jars of drinking water, three pairs of heavy blankets thrown on three of the heaps of bedding.

"You should not talk. You should sleep," the woman told us, and immediately sat down on a sheepskin by the entrance.

We wanted to ask questions but she shook her head until the gray mane blew out horizontally, then laid a gnarled old finger on her lips. Thereafter, gradually, as if she let her muscles find their proper relaxation one by one, she fell into the attitude in which those images were carved and stayed there motionless as if she herself were hewn out of the rock.

Chullunder Ghose sighed despondently and rolled himself on to a heap of sheepskins, pulling up the blankets over him and belching in the way that Hindus do before they sleep.

"So this is hope!" he grumbled. "Taste it—and it is snatched away at once! That is always my luck. Jimgrim goes forward alone, and we three will be sent back—take my word for it. I would say, let us go and join the Dugpas, if I weren't afraid of them!"

"I go where Jimgrim goes!" announced Narayan Singh. "Whoever can turn me back will have to be a good one! Let us sleep while we may. In the morning Jimgrim will be tired—aye, as a young recruit is tired after his first week on the drill-ground—only more! It may be he will need our strength. Let the hag keep watch."

HE FELL asleep, as his heavy breathing proved, within five minutes after he had spoken. Chullunder Ghose began to snore not many minutes afterwards. I, too, had a feeling that the woman might be trusted to sit sentinel. Her eyes were open, fixed in meditative calm, and she looked as if sleep were no part of her plan for the night. Nevertheless, I made up my mind to stay awake. I had a feeling which worried me, that something in the nature of a crack was opening in the intimacy I had long enjoyed with Grim. It was a vague, uncomfortable feeling. There was no explaining it.

So for a while I sat upright on a heap of sheepskins in between the knees of two of the great carved images and with my back against the wall. It was like sitting in a tomb. The little yellow flames of the butter-lamps cast leaping shadows that made the great carved figures seem to move, and when a rat ran over the floor I learned that my nerves were in no respectable condition. It was a big rat, but it had no right to startle me in that way. The old woman took no notice of it.

Then the wall grew cold against my back, so I used the blankets; and I had no sooner draped them over my shoulders than I felt an irresistible weight over my eyelids. It was not unnatural; a long march on the first day after convalescence, followed by a hot bath and a full meal could hardly have failed to produce that effect,

though I fought it, even forcing my eyelids open with my fingers.

It was not very long, I suppose, before sleep overcame me and I slipped into a dream, so realistic that every single detail of it stands out clear in memory. In the dream I was sitting on that heap of bedding, trying to force myself to stay awake and watching the old woman by the entrance; wondering how she had learned that trick of concentration with her eyes wide open, and what good it did her. I particularly remember I could hear the snoring of Chullunder Ghose.

All at once, silently, in came the man with the savagely masculine features and the womanly black hair, who had sent me reeling backwards in Sidiki ben Mahommed's house. He took no notice of the woman, and she none of him. He came up straight toward where I was sitting and the smile with which he greeted me was of triumph and condescension.

"So you have lost your friend?" he said maliciously.

From first to last throughout the dream my part in it was passive, except in so far as I fought all the while with an intense sleepiness, which I recognized as dangerous. I seemed to be in the power of something that held me speechless and unable to do anything without that individual's permission, although I could hear, see, obey and understand.

"Do you know what they are doing to your friend Grim?" he asked me. "Come and see."

I got off the bed and followed him, still conscious of the snoring of Chullunder Ghose. He led the way past the old woman, who moved her head slowly to follow us with her gaze, but without once blinking. We went out to the gallery from which we had first entered the main cavern, and there we stood side by side looking down at the men who were torturing Grim.

The fire of rough tamarisk knots had been changed to a circle of flame that appeared to come out of the floor of the cavern, and around that in a wider circle sat the *chelas* doing something, I could not see what, that increased the flame's fierceness whenever the old *Guru* spoke to them. The *Guru* was seated outside the circle of *chelas* on a mat that seemed to have no contact with the floor.

In the midst of the circle of flame stood Grim with his hands tied to a stake behind his back. His face was set like that of a red Indian enduring agony, but I saw that he held the cord that tied his wrists, in either hand and could release it if he chose.

"That," said the man beside me, "is the way they measure mercy. If he were an ordinary *chela* they would give him no cord and he would have to depend solely on his will. He will burn unless he stands exactly in the middle of the fire. They roast the weakness out of him. When they've finished with him he will have no human qualities at all and he might just as well be dead."

"Does he love?" asked the voice of the *Guru*.

"He loves!" cried the *chelas*.

"Burn it out of him!"

THEY did something that made the wall of flame white-hot and I saw Grim nearly fainting in the midst of it. A cloud that looked like smoke went up and when it vanished he no longer resembled the Grim I had known but had the dried-up look of an ascetic. He looked up through the flame and saw me watching him. His face, it seemed to me, was scornful.

"Does he hope?" asked the voice of the *Guru*.

"He hopes!" cried the *chelas*.

"Burn it out of him!"

Once more the flame grew white-hot and I saw Grim writhe, while he clung with all his might to the cord that held his wrists fast to the stake. Then smoke, in a sudden great cloud as if something had burst, and when it disappeared there was nothing even likeable about Grim; he was stern, contemptuous, emotionless, and when he looked toward me it was as if he wondered why he had ever called himself my friend.

"Does he hate?" asked the voice of the *Guru*.

"Now he hates life!" cried the *chelas*.

"Burn it out of him!"

Again the white-hot ring of flame, and Grim became invisible. The *chelas* laughed. The man beside me touched me on the shoulder.

"You have lost your friend," he said. "When a man can't hate there is nothing left of him. Now come."

He led me along the gallery toward an opening that was not there when the old woman led us in that evening. We passed

through gloom into a clear, sharp light in which everything was finely etched, and Rait sat at a table with a board in front of him on which he was moving things that looked like checkers.

Somewhere in the distance there was a maze of tangle-foot fly-papers, and sometimes, when he moved a piece on the board a man got caught by the feet. At each move something happened. He appeared to be controlling forces that obliged men to act in this or that way, overwhelming them if they refused.

"This is what Grim missed," said the voice of the man who guided me. "He took the wrong road—into nothingness."

Yet I could see that Rait's game was a losing one. The forces he controlled were taking hold of the men on whom he used them and he had to keep using more and more force to control his victims. I could see him sweating with the effort, his face white with fear; and he could not stop, because the moment he should relax the effort his victims were ready to turn the forces back on him.

The thing was horrible. It being in a dream, though vivid, the impending cataclysm was beyond the scope of ordinary thought. No words could describe what I saw was coming. My guide screamed, like a wildcat in a trap, and ran to Rait to try to help him with the pieces on the board, moving them swiftly, his eyes glaring; and at each move thousands were obliterated. Then Rait shouted and turned into a monster with fangs and claws, who tried to rend the man who had taken his place at the board. They fought yelling at each other, as the forces rushed toward them like a returning tide—and I woke up.

Narayan Singh was sitting up and swearing Sikh oaths. Chullunder Ghose was screaming, with his head under the blankets.

"A bad dream," said Narayan Singh and threw a folded sheepskin at the *babu*.

Chullunder Ghose sat up and stared at us, and at the shadows playing on the great carved figures.

"Krishna!" he exclaimed. "I had a dream of Dugpas! They were showing me how to grow great, on stuff to eat that worked like yeast. I was bursting!"

"Indigestion!" said the Sikh. "If you had paid your reckoning by chopping wood you would have slept like an honest man. I dreamed of war. It was a good game while it lasted, but the dead men would not stay dead, and when they came back they had other weapons. Not good."

"What are you men making all that row about?"

IT WAS Grim's voice. He had been sleeping quietly on some bedding heaped not far from mine, with the knees of an image between us. I went to look at him. There was no change that I could see. His face wore the same red Indian smile. There was the same quiet tolerance and resolution in his eyes.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Oh, we sat and talked for an hour or two."

"Nothing else?"

"Why, yes, we smoked—imported cigarets. We had a good time."

"No initiation?"

"Are you crazy?" he asked. "I yarned about our doings in the Near East and they told me some of the history of these caverns."

"Are you lying?" I asked him.

"No, you old bonehead," he retorted. "When there's anything I don't want to tell, I'll say so."

"Did the *Guru* mention us three?"

"He said you might have an experience. I don't know whether he meant tonight, or when. He wasn't very definite. I vote we sleep; we're moving on at daylight."

"Did he tell you how to reach Rait?"

"No. He remarked you're an elephant, but elephants, he said, go through things rather than around them, and though they sometimes fall into traps in consequence, they have been known to smash the traps. He said an elephant's a foolish beast with streaks of wisdom. Why the —— don't you turn in?"

"What do you suppose he meant by 'an experience'?" I demanded.

"Darned if I know. Go to bed, and go on dreaming. He said dreams are sometimes tests of character. Go back and dream you're an elephant!"

I returned to the bed and sat there, having had enough of dreams for one night. Grim fell asleep at once. So did Narayan Singh and Chullunder Ghose, and they lay quietly; but Grim dreamed all night long, as I could tell by the way he twitched and muttered.

And until she arose and lighted a torch and summoned us to breakfast, that old woman with the gray hair sat beside the entrance on her mat as motionless as if she had been carved of stone, her eyes fixed on infinity and an expression on her face as if she were listening to sounds none else could hear.

CHAPTER XVII

A TUNNEL THROUGH A MOUNTAIN

WE DID not see the great pearl-coated cavern again.

There was a blizzard blowing but the woman took no more account of it than if it were a mild spring zephyr. She gave us two sacks of barley for the ponies and led the way into the wind, with a short, spiked staff in her hand and her hair blown backward in a gray stream.

We had hard work to keep up with her. Dry, driving snow reduced visibility to a few yards and it was almost impossible to stare ahead into the stinging blast that froze the moisture on our eyelashes. Faces, hands, thighs and feet were numb. Teeth and ears ached. There were places where the narrow track was smooth ice under an inch or two of loose snow, and we had bewildering glimpses of crags upreared from bottomless ravines that howled, reechoing their own din, as the blizzard volleyed through them.

One pony, loaded with our canned provisions, slipped where the sheet-ice sloped outward from the rock-wall on our right and for a second hung on with his forefeet toed into the cracked ice. Then the ice gave way. He vanished backward into a maelstrom of snow that whirled in the throat of an abyss, and with him went the greater part of our provisions.

Soon after that we lost the way, and Grim, who was leading, reined up short at the end of a ledge that hung sheer over a precipice. There was hardly room to turn the ponies and we nearly lost two more in the confusion as they crowded one another.

By and by I found a cave—a miserable, draughty place that, nevertheless, afforded room and some protection from the storm. I drove the ponies into it and, yelling into Grim's ear, urged him that we should stay there until the storm was over. He agreed, but said he was still feeling fit and so would take careful bearings and go out and hunt for our guide. I objected to his going alone, and Narayan Singh voluntered to go with him.

Chullunder Ghose and I unloaded the ponies and piled up the loads as a windbreak. We had no fuel and there was thick frost on the cave-wall, but by sitting with our backs against the loads, we found it more tolerable in there than outside. However, conversation was impossible because of the incessant shrieking of the wind between the boulders that littered the ledge. We sat close together to conserve our body-heat and each pursued his own thoughts.

But Grim and Narayan Singh were gone a long time, and the storm grew, if anything, worse. Whenever the wind reached a certain pitch of violence it brought a booming sound out of the rear of the cave that threw the ponies into panic, so that we had to tie them all together by the head. Then I went to the rear of the cave and found a long, low passage, through which it looked just possible to crawl, and out of which the hollow booming came at intervals whenever the wind reached a certain pitch of violence.

It seemed worth while to explore in hope of finding a warmer place in which to wait for Grim, so I climbed up on the ledge on which the passage opened and crawled in. I meant to go alone, but as soon as Chullunder Ghose discovered I had left him he grew frightened and came after me.

Until he wedged his great bulk into the passage there was light enough to see by, but the dim light that had found its way past me was now completely cut off. However, by blocking the passage he also obstructed the wind, so I reached in my pocket for some matches.

Before I could strike one Chullunder Ghose called out to me:

"For ——'s sake, Rammy sahib, I believe this roof is falling in!"

I crawled backward and tried to shove him free with my feet against his shoulders, but could not get sufficient purchase on the rock, although I shoved hard enough to make him yell. He said he was quite sure the roof was squeezing down on him, but I ascribed that to panic and told him to lie still until Grim and Narayan Singh returned, when they could pull him out backward by the feet.

I went forward again. The air continued fresh, although Chullunder Ghose had cut off the supply behind me; and in places it

felt as if some one had enlarged the tunnel with a pick.

I CRAWLED a prodigious distance and struck matches until I had only half a dozen left, discovering no more than that the tunnel kept on curving toward the right, until at last the curve reversed itself and I saw a pin-spot of yellowish light a long way off. It was certainly not daylight. I crawled closer to it and lay still.

For a long time I could only hear my heart-beats. Then a noise from behind announced that Chullunder Ghose was growing weary of confinement, but that was only like a hollow murmur from the bottom of a well. It may have sounded like the far away voice of the gale to those whose forms I now began to preceive, like dim ghosts, seated in a cave in front of where I lay.

Grim's back was toward me. He had pulled off his yak-skin cap and the shape of his head was unmistakable. Besides, presently I heard his voice, and there was no doubt it was Grim. Sitting facing him was the gray-haired woman, the light from two small butter-lamps reflected on her face, making it and her hair look almost lemon-colored. Narayan Singh was not there. The third member of the party was a man I had not seen before, although he vaguely resembled one of the older *chelas* who had sat by the fire in the stalagmite cavern.

I would have called to Grim, but there was something in his attitude and in the low-pitched voices that suggested secrecy. It occurred to me he might be getting information which he might not get if I disturbed him. The first words that I heard distinctly were the woman's.

"They will treat you as they treated me."

"He said," Grim answered, "you have been well treated and are grateful."

The woman sneered.

"He told you that? Look at me!"

Then the other man spoke—

"Look at her! Longer and harder than any she has striven. She has been obedient. She has destroyed her own desires. Day-long, night-long she has watched—worked—ministered. Not even she can count the tale of years. Can she go? Then whither? She has thrown the world away, and her return for it is this that you have seen—servitude without thanks. Not even may she listen to the teaching. As for approaching nearer to the mysteries, she has abandoned hope of it. And they will treat you in the same way, letting you advance until retreat is out of the question, then—nothing more!"

"Why should you trouble about my prospects?" Grim asked.

The woman laughed, with a crackle like the sound of dry brushwood burning.

"I warned you," she remarked. "Deal plainly with him."

"Am I not plain?" the man answered. "Everything is forbidden! We are forbidden even to talk of what we know. Grudgingly, little by little, we are taught some fragment and then are put to wearisome long tests to demonstrate that we can refrain from using what we worked so hard to win. Is it likely that you, who have not spent half a lifetime sitting at a *Guru's* feet, will be allowed to go beyond, for instance, me or that woman? I have a proposal to make."

"I have a man to rescue," Grim answered him.

"I offer to help to rescue him. Why not?"

Grim's answer, like a bark, broke on the silence—

"Why?"

"I have told you why. This *chela* training is too long and too empty of results. I don't believe that man you want to rescue, as you call it, is in trouble. Some of the Dugpas may be devils but not all. The difference is this—our *Gurus* make us miserable with what they call self-restraint. Dugpas all make use of what they know and have a good time doing it. Why not have a good time while it lasts? There is no such satisfaction as the use of knowledge."

"Is it the quest after knowledge that's making them torture the man?"

"Tshuh-tshuh! Do you believe that? Are you sure of it?"

"RAIT wrote a letter," said Grim.

"Are you sure? Dugpas can forge handwriting. Isn't it likelier they are holding a door open for you? Since you haven't been trained to interpret mental messages—although, for that very reason you are all the more amenable to mental impulse, which you can't understand, but which governs you nevertheless—

how should they make your approach to them easy except by some trick? They could goad you, but you might rush wildly in the wrong direction. What was it put the thought into your head to enter Tibet?"

"Yes! What was it?" said the woman.

Grim did not answer.

"Why should the White Lodge be willing to receive you, and the Black Lodge not?" the man went on. "Which would you rather have—knowledge now, or knowledge at the end of twenty or thirty lifetimes—which is all the White Lodge offers you and at the cost of endless self-discipline. And they don't even offer it. They make you struggle for it. They withhold it. Whereas the Black Lodge makes things easy. They will teach you and send you back to the United States, where you will enjoy prosperity and influence. I hate this barren land, into which I was born and which my die is cast.

He paused, but Grim said nothing, so the man resumed:

"Listen—by being nobody and living like a louse a man may go through life and never even know there is such knowledge as I offer you—such opportunity. But you are not a louse. You must ally yourself with one force or the other or you will simply be torn apart—as countries often are that try to keep neutral in wartime. The White Lodge is extremely difficult to enter, and if you should succeed in finding the place you seek, the odds are ten thousand to one you would not be admitted. If admitted—well, imagine for yourself, if you can, what it means to be taught prodigious secrets, which you are not allowed to use! I assure you, virtue grows monotonous. And if your virtue grows weak, you are out—like a sore-footed soldier—like me!"

Grim spoke at last:

"So that's it, eh? You're a *chela* dismissed for disobedience."

The woman's laughter crackled again like burning brushwood—

"Didn't I tell you he is no fool?"

"But if you choose the Black Lodge," the man went on, "you will be allowed to use the forces whose nature will be revealed to you. The Black Lodge, too, is difficult to enter, because none but he who has strength of character is useful to them. But, once in, you are in the ranks of the magicians. You become a power. You are given work to do from which you see immediate results. You are on the side of the erosive forces, like the wind and flood, that are just as much agents of evolution as are those other forces that assemble the detritus and so slowly build up structures that shall only be destroyed again. So now choose."

"I chose some time ago," Grim answered.

The man stood up and I could see his face more distinctly. He was a thin-lipped, handsome fellow with a certain truculence about the angle of his jaw. His sheep-skin overcoat was open in front, showing what looked like expensive clothing underneath.

"Which way?" he demanded.

"I might tell you that, perhaps, when I have traveled it a bit," said Grim.

The man sneered, and his smile was like the lip-lift of a panther. I pulled my pistol clear and waited.

"Look at her!" The man pointed at the woman, who kept her eyes fixed on Grim. "Unless you die of weariness you will look and be like her in due time—sexless, hopeless, hideous, neglected—nothing but a drudge for them who keep their secrets to themselves!"

Grim stood up then. I saw the corner of his mouth. He shook himself to adjust the heavy yak-skin overcoat.

"Is it storming still?" he asked.

He began to walk toward some exit that I could not see and the woman gave him the lamp to hold, she stepping in between him and the other, who presently followed them.

I could not turn, so I went forward, in total darkness now that they had taken away the lamp.

I had reached what felt like the end of the hole and was groping for hand- and foot-hold to descend on to the cave floor, when something touched me. I was practically helpless, hanging downward by the legs. I tried to crawl back, but a hand took me under the atmpit and a voice said in English:

"This way. You will fall badly unless you lean on me."

Another arm took hold of me. I felt myself being lifted.

"Jump!" said the same voice.

I supposed it was Narayan Singh, so let myself go confidently and was swung, legs outward, in a semi-circle, landing on level rock.

"There was a hole several hundred feet deep directly under you," said the voice;

and suddenly I knew it was not Narayan Singh, but some one whose clothes vaguely smelt of sandal-wood.

"This way. Hold this or you will never find the way out," he said, thrusting the end of a girdle into my hand.

I could see nothing. He led me along a winding passage between smooth walls that grew gradually colder as they zigzagged, until finally I could hear the wind and saw dim daylight. Even so, I did not recognize his back. Like me, he nearly filled the passage with his head within two inches of the roof, so his figure was a mere black silhouette between me and the light.

IT WAS not until he turned to face me outside, on a platform sheltered from the storm by projecting spurs of rock, that I recognized Lhaten, with the old, quiet, friendly laughter in his eyes.

"You are an elephant," he said. "You blunder into things. It was lucky for you that I knew you were there."

"How did you know it?" I asked him.

"Curiosity," he said, "has been the death of many an elephant! We have ways of knowing things. What do you think of Jimgrim now?"

"Haven't you a way of knowing that, too?" I retorted.

"Yes," he said.

"Then why ask? Curiosity?"

He laughed.

"No. I couldn't read your thought before you did think. I gave you opportunity to mask your thought. That fellow in the cave was dangerous, and so were you. You might have shot him."

"He was a fool," I said, and was going to say more, but he interrupted—

"A Dugpa and a fool are one, but a fool can be deadly dangerous."

He began to turn along the track that led around the windward spur, but I stopped him and asked—

"Where did you learn English?"

"Cambridge University. German at Heidelberg. French at the Sorbonne. Why? Did you suppose we kept ourselves secluded in a cloud of ignorance?"

He turned again and led the way around the spur, leaning into the wind as if he liked it. The ledge grew gradually narrower until at last there was barely room to set one foot on it and we had to move crabwise around a cliff-side with a howling gorge beneath us—clinging with our fingers to the rock wall.

When we reached broad track again he led for many miles around the outside of the mountain in which those caves were until, when he paused to let me overtake him and rest a moment, I asked if he had seen Narayan Singh.

"He draws the sword too readily," he answered and again led on, with the clear intention of avoiding further questions.

Now we climbed along the bare ridge of an escarpment with the full fury of the blizzard in our faces—time and again we were almost blown into the abyss—and even he grew weary of it. At last he took shelter, sitting on the snow that partly filled a hollow between tumbled crags, and I crouched facing him. The wind shrieked through the crevices and I had to shout even to hear my own voice—

"Where are Grim and the woman?" I asked him.

He bade me look backward along the ridge across which we had come and presently, when a blast of wind lifted and rent the snow-cloud, I saw three figures struggling toward us.

"Three?" he asked. "Good. Then they have found the Sikh."

He seemed relieved to know it, as if he had suspected that Narayan Singh might be in difficulties.

"He opens eggs," he said, "with sledge-hammers."

Ten minutes after that the woman leaped into the hollow with her hair all caked with snow and frozen; it was almost like a fashionable hat and made her look ridiculous. She laid her lips to Lhaten's ear and whispered.

Then Grim came, dog-tired, and dropped beside me, seeming surprized to find me there but saying nothing. Narayan Singh slid down the side of the hole and squatted on his heels between Grim and Lhaten.

"THERE is nothing else than Dugpas in this land!" he shouted. "It is fit for nothing else!"

"Have you seen one?" asked Lhaten, moving aside.

"I slew one!"

"Man of blood!" said Lhaten.

He got up at once and led the way out of the hollow, finding a track that brought us

to the ledge beside the cave where we had left the ponies.

"You will have to sleep here," he remarked. "She will show you where fuel is hidden."

He stood aside to watch us pass in, taking care, I thought, that the Sikh's clothes should not touch him. I went instead to the rear of the cave to pull Chullunder Ghose out of his hole, and it took me several minutes to dislodge him without tearing half his skin off. He was chattering with cold and nearly off his head with terror.

"Voices, Rammy sahib! Voices along the tunnel! When you pulled my feet I thought you were a Dugpa! Oh, this thusness! Why leave home to come to such a place! Nevertheless, I will not turn back! This Cæsar has crossed Rubicon!"

Lhaten ceased talking to Grim as Narayan Singh entered the cave behind the woman, both of them heavily burdened with wood from some near-by cache. Narayan Singh threw down his heap on the floor and stood and looked at Lhaten, folding his arms truculently.

"Man of peace, I offend you?"

"No," said Lhaten.

"Take me by the hand then!"

Narayan Singh held out his right hand, which Lhaten took in his without the slightest hesitation.

"But if you keep on killing you will kill yourself, because blood draws blood," said Lhaten.

"Lo, I slew a Dugpa," said the Sikh. "What of it? I have slain many whose time had come to die, but who were worthier to live than that one.

"Consider; I followed Jimgrim in search of the woman. She beckoned us over that ridge we crossed a while ago, and we came to a cave, which she entered, bidding Jimgrim follow. But to me she said—

" 'Wait and guard the place.'

"So I stood in the storm until a man came who sought to enter. I forbade him and we had speech civilly enough until he told me he would show another entrance to the cave, that I should guard instead of that one and I gave him leave to go to Lhassa or wherever else he chose, so be he moved himself. He went, but he pointed to where the other entrance was.

"And soon I saw Jimgrim leave that other entrance; or it seemed to me that I saw Jimgrim. He walked away from me in great haste, so I followed. He led me a great climb over the mountain, I can tell you, and when I came on him—or thought I did—he vanished!

" 'Dugpas!' I said to myself; and I set to work to find that cave again. But the snow had blotted out my trail. And when at last I drew near the cave there were footsteps showing that many people had come out of it. And there, standing in the cave mouth was the one who had sought to enter. He said he would show me where Jimgrim had gone, so I followed him. But there were no footsteps where we went and the trail was very difficult, so I called a halt. Then he said to me—

" 'Your Jimgrim is no good. He is in the wrong hands. He will soon be like Rait is—mad and being practised on. You should abandon Jimgrim and let me show you genuine mysteries.'

"So I showed him a genuine one—how a man's life leaves the body when a pistol-bullet enters at the brain. After a while came Jimgrim and the woman looking for me. Have you anything to say to that?"

"Not a great deal" Lhaten answered. "Only if you keep on killing there will be a weight of death against you that not even your courage can prevail against."

"You speak riddles," the Sikh answered.

"The word two is a riddle, until you divide it into one plus one," said Lhaten and then, buttoning his overcoat as if he heard a summons through the gale, he took his leave of us and hurried off.

Lhaten always came and went as if there were a hotel or a club-house just around the corner.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHULLUNDER GHOSE, CHENRESI

GRIM now knew something I did not know. He saw something I did not see; and, though all sorts of similes suggest themselves to illustrate the feeling I experienced, none quite explains it.

Not being an artist with either pen or brush, the facts of art don't limit me, and none except an artist, possibly, will smile when I suggest that a hack portrait painter or a writer of journalese may feel the same toward a rising genius as I began to feel toward Grim. I was aware that his genius had gone beyond mine and, though by his

own unrecognition of the fact he puzzled me, I felt an impulse, free—I think—from rivalry or any meaner instinct, to discover the secret and so to keep, if not abreast of him, at least not far behind.

The change in the attitude of others toward him was much more marked than any outward change in Grim himself. The old woman treated him as if he were a young god, to be waited on and possibly reproved at times, but destined for a throne on high Olympus. She shared the cave with us that night, and though Grim did not notice it I saw that she lay where her body would keep the draft away from him.

That blizzard was the worst we had experienced and it raged the whole night through. We lay amid a din of avalanches, crashing boulders and a cataclysmic orchestra of shrieking wind. The very mountain seemed to tremble, and the tunnel that led from the rear of our cave kept up a series of irregular explosions like the booming of a big drum.

But dawn broke cold and clear, with no wind, and our thermometer at zero—falling steadily. The silence as we filed out of the cave on pony-back and saw the tumbled range around us glittering under an azure sky, was stupefying. Where the wind had shrieked the night before, now sound itself seemed frozen. When a pinnacle of ice a mile away crashed down into a chasm and was split into glittering jewels on the fanged rocks, all the resulting din came to us like a whisper, as if even echoes were afraid to speak.

Hitherto, we had marched into curtains of snow that revealed only glimpses of crag and chasm when the wind tore momentary rents in it. Now square-leagues looked like inches, and the peaks a hundred miles away seemed almost within pistol-shot. The ponies, stringing out along the trail in front of me, picking their way behind our bare-legged guide, resembled insects. Yet in the clear air I could count the feathers of an eagle's wings, soaring a hundred feet below me and a thousand feet above the snow-filled valley bottom.

NINE-tenths of all the track we traveled was bare ridge, swept by the wind so that no snow lay on it. At times we crossed naked summits; oftener we skirted their flanks along ledges that hung over fathomless space. There was made trail here and there, with boulder-bridges heaped across wide fissures in the rock. But now and then the trail ceased altogether, where the storms had wrecked a mountainside, and there we had to chop a foothold for the ponies across slopes where the frozen crust would bear a man's weight but let the loaded ponies through on to the glass-ice underneath.

There was one such place that sloped toward a chasm on our left hand, and for more than half a mile we had to skirt the edge of it, keeping away from the cliff on our right because icicles that crashed in the strength of the sun were hanging there. We were midway over when we saw men peering at us, their hooded heads jet-black against the sky as they leaned over the top of the cliff from which ice hung like blades of guillotines.

There was a noise that at first suggested intermittent rifle-fire, and Narayan Singh made swift to load one of the Tibetan rifles Benjamin had sold us. But the crash of ice explained the sound. They were chopping the ton-weight icicles to make them fall across our path.

Narayan Singh fired three times, and it was impossible to see whether he had hit a man or not. But one of his bullets smashed into the very root of an enormous icicle and brought it avalanching down on us, crushing the loaded pony next ahead of me and sweeping him over the edge of the slope. A yell of exultation from the cliff announced that the disaster had been seen, but the rifle had served its purpose; no more ice was dropped on us and our assailants vanished.

When we reached the end of that gruesome slope Grim called a halt to rest the ponies and our guide came back to find out why we were not following. Grim asked her who the men might be who had dropped that ice on us.

"Did not Lhaten warn you?" she retorted. "Did he not say, in the cave last night that monks are watching for you?"

Not long after that we saw their monastery—if the name serves for a wasps' nest built on a cliffside under the projecting shoulder of a mountain, so that none could reach it from above, and from beneath the only access was up a zigzag path a few feet wide that, if defended, not an enemy in the world could force.

"Whither you go next," she said and

pointed to the monastery, laughing at the expression on Chullunder Ghose's face.

"Krishna!" he exploded.

"Rammy sahib, they have made our Jimgrim mad! He leads on!"

"None but the mad can lead except in circles," said Narayan Singh. "I have served under many officers. Madmen were always the best."

Lhaten probably had said a great deal more to Grim than I overheard in the cave the night before. While I was dragging out the *babu* from the tunnel and Narayan Singh was bringing fuel, there was plenty of time for conversation. However, while we lingered on a broad ledge where one dead, dwarfed and twisted tamarisk was held by the roots in rock that it had burst asunder in the days gone by, a shower of boulders dropped from overhead; one shearing off the tree as clearly as if a giant's ax had done it.

"So much for doubt!" said Narayan Singh. "We should have ridden on."

He suited action to the word and led the way. Another volley of boulders crashed to the ledge behind us, many of them striking where we sat our ponies half a dozen breaths before, then bounding down into the ravine, whence their echoes followed us like laughter from the underworld.

I tried to overtake Grim, but there were ponies in the way and the track kept narrowing until the loads on one side scraped the cliff and on the other hung projecting over the ravine. When I shouted he merely waved his hand and rode on; and I could see the woman, striding along like a mountaineer ahead of him, looking straight toward the distant monastery. Whoever was frightened, she was not. Her gait suggested cheerfulness because of the journey's end in view.

AND now, instead of following the ridge that joined two mountains, we descended by hair-raising grades to the very depths of the ravine and crossed it where echoing ice had spanned the frozen watercourse with a bridge that Romans might have built. The ice was even yellow from the ochre borne down-stream, and from a hundred yards away it so resembled masonry that I looked for a guard-house and expected to see some one with a rifle standing there.

The effect was increased by the presence of tamarisks crowded near-by in the folds of the gorge, and of wood-stacks where the monks had cut their winter's fuel and piled it, cleaning up even the splinters of the precious stuff. There were crags on the cliff behind the bridge that looked like castle turrets, and the track beyond the ice-bridge led between two bastions of naked rock that would have checked artillery.

But instead of a man with a rifle, a young monk in a soiled cloak of faded yellow appeared midway in between the bastions and, with a prayer-wheel whirling in his right hand, seemed to challenge us. He was shouting, but the echoes threw the words into confusion, so that it sounded as if ten or twelve men were holding a noisy argument.

Our gray old guide strode straight toward him, swinging along with the stride of a man, her spiked staff like a marshal's baton in the hollow of her arm, and though the monk kept shouting at her, she neither changed her gait, nor paused until she came within two yards and turned her back on him to wait for us—we taking our time about it because the far slope of the bridge was slippery and the ponies needed help.

By the time we reached those bastions the monk was foaming at the mouth. The frenzy in his eyes was like a maniac's. He kept his prayer-wheel spinning like a top while he searched our faces; but when Chullunder Ghose came dragging the last of the ponies he seemed to choke, as if his heart was in his throat—stared with his yellow eyes popping—and ran.

Our gray guide looked at Grim and laughed, her wrinkles leaping into sudden life and vanishing again.

"They in the twilight jump at all illusions," she said. "I told the fool the Lord Chenresi is his monastery's guest," and, with a mocking gesture at Chullunder Ghose, she strode on between the bastions.

We had nearly a dozen miles to traverse yet, although the monastery was not more than one mile distant, as an eagle would have gone. The trail led all around the bases of the intervening hills, marked well enough because the monks had used it for packing fuel, but steep, difficult and dangerous. Our ponies were exhausted when we reached the cliff on which the wasps'-nest buildings perched with their stone walls leaning outward from a ledge three thousand feet above us. And, weary though the ponies were, they had to climb three thousand feet, up

a path that I imagine is unique even in that land of guarded solitude.

At the foot there was a *chorten*—a very big one, looking something like a dome over a tomb. It was placed in the midst of the track, which forked around it, so that all who came or went could pass it on their right hand. Behind it was a fissure in the cliffside, narrow and as ragged as forked lightning. Entering that, we found ourselves inside a screen of rock that enclosed a space of two or three acres, deep under accumulated snow.

An irregular road had been dug through the snow to a gash in the foot of the cliff, where it entered and ascended for a hundred feet through a tunnel that had been enlarged out of a natural cave. Then we came into daylight on a ledge of half an acre, from which we again entered a tunnel and rose another hundred feet, if not more. From the upper mouth of that second tunnel the track led for nearly half a mile along a level parapet of rock, until it turned sharply and began to zigzag upward across the face of the cliff. It was so steep that a loaded pony had the utmost he could do to climb; but it was very largely hand-hewn and had been surveyed so that the prevailing wind would sweep it clear of snow.

In places it looked almost as if dynamite had done the work, but the rocks were split too evenly along the grain. The fractures were ancient, but at one of the hairpin turns we passed a rock that told the story. They had bored and filled the hole with water, leaving that to freeze in the terrific winter weather. Nature had done the rest.

There was a marvelous economy of distance—a contempt of steepness indicating that the men who did the work had not had horses in their minds. And there were sections where the wind would not have swept the snow away, where tunnels had been cut for fifty yards or more—not straight, but following the rock faults.

LEADING our staggering ponies, we emerged at last through a ragged gap on to a ledge so small that the buildings reared on it appeared to be pushing each other off. There was a courtyard, thirty or thirty-five feet square, crowded between the mountain and the monastery storehouse. But in order to make room for that, the builders had projected the foundations of their walls out over the sheer cliffside—which created the appearance of a wasps' nest from below.

The roofs looked Chinese, but the architecture was careless, crude and—compared to the road we had climbed by—modern. There was, possibly, accommodation for a hundred monks, if they should choose to live with economy of comfort.

We were greeted by a great horn-blowing and the clangor of a group of bronze bells swung on one beam. Not a monk was in sight until a man in yellow hood and robes emerged out of a door that faced us, on the far side of the courtyard, and went through the motions of a lamaistic benediction. He was followed by a group of excited monks, a few of whom wore black, the others yellow. All had prayer-wheels, which they kept in constant motion.

He looked nervously suspicious of our old guide, who greeted him with a note of laughter that seemed, nevertheless, to hint at consequences should he fail to answer civilly. And civilly he spoke up, in Tibetan, using complimentary phrases as he asked our names, and whence we were, and why we came.

The woman glanced at Grim and stepped back, leaving him a pace or two in front of all of us. But the man in yellow hardly looked at Grim at first; his eyes were on Chullunder Ghose, and his lips kept working as if something choice to eat were almost within his grasp.

"Our names don't matter," Grim said. "Tell why your monks attacked us on the road."

"It is the custom," he answered, his eyes meeting Grim's for a second, then returning to the *babu's* face, which seemed to fascinate him.

Grim made a gesture toward the woman—"Is our guide not known to you?"

"Oh, yes." He pursed his lips and looked ashamed of mentioning a woman. "But the Higher Law attends to whether guides succeed or not. They who die, die. They who do not die, may approach. This is a sacred place."

He began looking at Chullunder Ghose again.

"Do you mean, you try to kill whoever comes this way?" Grim demanded.

He answered impatiently, as if he thought the question stupid:

"It is death that kills. Are you not here? Of what are you complaining?"

Still staring at Chullunder Ghose, he gave a curt command, and some of his monks began leading our ponies into a shed backed against the cliff on one side of the courtyard. I went in with them to make sure that the ponies were unloaded properly, and to see what could be done about obtaining barley.

It took time to bargain with the monks for grain, and when I came out the courtyard was empty, except for the old woman, who pointed toward a door that faced me. I opened it and walked unannounced into a square room in which an image of Chenresi squatted at the farther end. The walls were bare of ornament but all the roof-beams were extravagantly carved, and at the side of the room on the right of the image was a low, carved wooden divan on which the ruler of the monastery sat surrounded by a dozen of his followers.

Facing him on a mat on the floor, Chullunder Ghose sat between Grim and Narayan Singh. Our *babu* looked embarrassed. The Sikh was scowling. Grim wore his poker expression, which signifies nothing except that he is thinking like a clock behind it. Nobody took any notice of me, so I sat down on a small rug near the door, where I could watch proceedings.

THE lama in the yellow robe who ruled the place was talking, in a vain, didactic voice intended to impress the monks who stood around him, as undoubtedly it did. But the dialect he used was more like the Ladakhi than Tibetan, and I was able to piece together most of the conversation.

"That woman said, 'The Lord Chenresi is a visitor.' She is a woman. There are devils in her. But if it were untrue she would not have dared to say it. It is therefore true."

"I am flesh and blood, and I am hungry," Chullunder Ghose answered.

"The Lord Buddha also fasted, so that is no argument," the lama retorted. "You wish not to be recognized, and it is possible that you yourself don't know what great one is incarnate in you. Nevertheless, I recognize the Lord Chenresi. It appears to me that he has chosen a very inferior body, doubtless for his own good reasons. Discipline is needed—penances—instruction and self-mortification, that the spirit may prevail over the flesh. I know. I am wise in these matters. It is no use your denying it.

"How is the new Living Buddha chosen when the Living Buddha dies? Does he not reincarnate into the offspring of a peasant-woman very often? But are they deceived, whose task it is to find and recognize him? And the child, in whom the Living Buddha is incarnate, is he not like other children? Does he not need discipline and teaching? Must the body not be brought into subjection with the help of learned counselors, in order that the spirit may prevail over the corruption of the flesh, and wisdom pour forth?

"What has brought you here? You say, you seek a certain Lung-Tok who is held fast in a dungeon. Allegory! All our books are filled with allegories. I am learned in interpretation. That is the voice of the spirit, seeking to release humanity from bondage on the Wheel of Life! Hither you came, because the spirit in you guided. Here you shall find refuge while the flesh melts and the spirit shines through."

Poor Chullunder Ghose suppressed a shudder and the vanity that lingered with him until then began to wilt. He glanced at Grim, but Grim stared straight in front of him—listening—thinking. On Narayan Singh's face there began to flicker the resemblance of a smile, as if he saw the full significance of our *babu's* dilemma and was pitiless.

I think Grim whispered then, but it is very hard to tell what he is doing when he sits with that expression on his face. He can speak without moving his lips and, like ventriloquists, he has the knack of making your own eyes deceive you.

At any rate, Chullunder Ghose's vanity returned—but with a hundred-fold effectiveness because he had assumed it now and was acting a part, whereas before he had been merely flattered by the identification of himself as the abiding-place of an incarnate god. Besides, his wits were working, spurred by that threat of penances and education.

"Priest," he answered. "Who are you to speak to me with arrogance? It is the flesh that speaks. Your spirit would forbid such insolence unless your inner ears were deaf. Shame on you! Ignorant monk that you are, shall you teach such as me?"

Never a mouse amid the skirts of maiden

aunts created such a fuss as that speech did! The ruler of the monastery—he was far below the rank of abbott—had not wit enough to hide the half-hysteria that seized him. He sat blowing out his cheeks and kept his prayer-wheel going like a spinning top.

The other monks were simply fanatics, reduced by superstition and necessity to a state of ignorant and cunningly enforced submission to the lama's will. It staggered them to hear him rebuked and to see him unable to answer. Some leered, as if they hoped the bonds of discipline were broken. Others looked frightened. They were torn between allegiance to their chief and superstition.

Grim probably whispered again, although I did not see his lips move. Our *babu* rose to the occasion.

"Do you expect me to reveal myself to mere monks?" he demanded. "Do you think I would favor such ears as theirs with what I might possibly say to you alone?"

The question worked like magic. He in yellow was himself again. He turned on the men around him and rebuked them furiously. His mildest epithet was "worms in a dog's entrails," and the mildest threat was, "Insects you shall be, ——dung-beetles!"

He decreed half-rations for a month. He ordered midnight penances. They ran from him before he should order worse things; and when they had left the room by an inner door he went to make sure none was listening outside. Slamming the door again, he strode back to his seat, with his prayer-wheel like a jester's bauble whirling in his right hand.

"Now," he said, "speak!"

I admired him at last, in a way. He abandoned hypocrisy. With his hands laid on his thighs and an expression on his face of "now or never," he defied us, tacitly admitting that he did not believe a word that he had said about Chenresi being incarnated in the *babu*.

It was Grim who answered, looking up like some *chela* answering his *Guru*—

"It is for you to speak first."

"You are foreigners!"

The lama put scorn into the word, and something more than the suggestion of a threat.

"We are entitled to use this route," Grim answered.

"Here I am the custodian!"

THE lama blew his cheeks out, tossed his hands palms upward and then slapped his thighs, implying, without wasting words on it, that he was sitting there to bargain, not to argue about rights of way.

I opened the door an inch or two and looked for our gray-haired guide, but she had vanished. The courtyard was empty. I shut the door again.

"I am a lama," said the man in yellow. "It is lamas who identify incarnate Buddhas. If I say the Lord Chenresi is among us, some will listen. Some of high rank will confirm my word. It is a good thing for religion to have manifestations—which have been scarce of late, and men are not so respectful as they used to be. Also, it is a long way from Lhassa to this monastery. There can be a rumor sent forth, that will take hold and excite, arousing the hope of people, of whom many will be monks. So that they who will be sent from Lhassa to investigate will not dare to deny the story, knowing how much safer it is to deceive men than to undeceive them."

"There is no deception about you," said Grim. "You are a rascal."

"Not so. There have lately been rumors of new living Buddhas, but the plots failed because the wrong men managed them and the conspirators were too near Lhassa. I am far off—and the right man."

He pursed his lips. In that mood he looked capable of emulating Genghis Khan, and it was hard to remember he was the same hysterical incompetent who had been panic-stricken when rebuked before his monks.

Suddenly, like a bolt out of the blue, he gave us actual news of Rait.

"What is this that you seek?" he demanded. "Some *chiling** who has been imprisoned? Well; they who hold him are expecting you, and if they catch you—pfouff!"

He blew out his cheeks again and slapped his thighs.

"As it happens," he went on, "those are the very ones who would accept the Lord Chenresi. They are individuals who know that there are no hairs on a fish. They are not fools. They are powerful. Some of them are my friends, though I do wear yellow."

"What do you propose?" Grim asked him.

*A foreigner.

He pointed at Chullunder Ghose, whose face turned liver-color with the dread that seized him. Humor, vanity and courage were all gone and his jaw trembled as he stammered out a protest:

"I will not have greatness thrust on me! I—"

"Give him to me, and I will get your *chiling* for you!"

Grim held his tongue. Chullunder Ghose eyed Grim as a criminal looks at the jury when it files in to announce their verdict. Narayan Singh spoke:

"I say no to it! Aye, by my honor I say no to it!"

Grim snapped three English words at him—

"Who asked you?"

Stung by the snub, Narayan Singh muttered and glared at the *babu*. Grim made a proposal to the lama:

"If you know where the man we seek is hidden, tell me, and we four will make our own terms with his captors."

"*Atcha! Bohut atcha!*" said Narayan Singh.

CHAPTER XIX

THE YELLOW LAMA

THAT yellow lama was an incarnation of a paradox, whatever our *babu* might be. He seemed to deduce from Grim's speech that we were on better than nodding terms with the black-art experts, whose prisoner Rait was, or was supposed to be.

"*Chiling*," he said, forcing his voice, which was inclined to waver from so many mixed emotions, "you came here with a White Lodge guide. You go to a Black Lodge destination?"

"Will you do what I asked?" Grim demanded.

"I question how you came, not knowing how to find the way hence," said the lama.

It appeared to me we were as good as prisoners, unless we chose to use our firearms and bolt for it down that zigzag trail. At almost any part of it they could easily drop boulders on us; and if, on utterly leg-weary ponies, we should manage to escape the monks, there would remain the impossible task of finding our own way forward or backward before our scant remaining store of barley and canned rations was exhausted.

However, Grim put another interpretation on it:

"We are your guests," he remarked.

"Ah!" said the lama slyly, "but you said you wish to go to Jalung-Dzong."

Grim's eyebrow twitched. That was our first intimation of the name of the place where Rait might be. But Grim put a doubtful face on it—

"You are trying to deceive us as to where the man is."

"There is a devil in you," said the lama, wetting his lips with a tongue that licked out swiftly like a snake's.

He began studying Chullunder Ghose again. Then, rolling his tongue in his mouth a time or two, he presently propounded terms.

"I will send you to Jalung-Dzong, provided you leave that one here. Let them give you the *chiling*. I will let them appoint this a place of pilgrimage. Crowds may come and see the living Lord Chenresi. That will arouse religious fervor, which brings crowds into subjection. For me there will be perquisites. For them, power, which is all they crave. That one," he said, nodding at the *babu*, "shall have adulation and a life of ease. You may take your *chiling* and return to where you came from. You agree?"

Grim did not answer. The lama began to look furious, swaying himself to and fro—glanced at me, as if a thought occurred to him of appealing to me to manage Grim—abandoned that, and played a trump card suddenly.

"You are spies!" he said, curling his lip.

"Yes, we certainly are," Grim retorted.

Chullunder Ghose gasped. Narayan Singh moved almost imperceptibly, his right hand drawing nearer to the pistol hidden underneath his coat. I held my breath. If there is anywhere on earth where a denounced spy is in danger it is on the frontier of Tibet. But our emotions were as nothing to the lama's, whose eyes nearly bulged from his head. A spy, who calmly boasted he was one, was something new in his experience.

For a second I thought he would summon his monks. Most lamaistic monasteries have their fighting complement—the more degraded ones particularly. Known as "*dok-dokpas*," they belong to the lowest rank of the fraternity. Too lazy or indifferent to memorize the ancient texts, they are not qualified to attain merit in that way, so they acquire it second-hand, fighting and brawling to preserve their betters

from the necessity of fight. Perhaps the sudden movement of Narayan Singh's right hand toward his weapon, or, it may be, the look of confidence on Grim's face, made him change his mind.

"Did *they* send you to spy on me?" he asked.

Grim did not answer.

The lama got up suddenly and left the room by the inner door through which his monks went when he drove them out. Chullunder Ghose seized Grim's arm.

"Let us go! Let us go now—swiftly!" he insisted.

BEFORE Grim could answer the lama returned followed by a monk in black robes with a sheepskin jacket over them. He looked like a stage assassin. His ferocity, and the care he took to show it, verged on the ridiculous. He rolled his eyes, folded his arms, and snorted as if the very air he breathed offended him; and he eyed us one by one like a butcher considering sheep. When the lama sat he stood behind him glaring at us.

"If I had known it was *they* who wanted that *chiling* who is held at Jalung-Dzong, they should have had him long ago," said the lama.

He appeared to have recovered self-possession, but he drooped his eyelids. He had a false card up his sleeve.

"This monk," he said, "has often been to Jalung-Dzong, and he will go now, though the way is difficult in winter. He will bear my message, which the monks of Jalung-Dzong will not reject. So when you reach a certain place beyond the Tsang-Po River you shall find the *chiling*. You may take him. Do what you will. If I had known *they* wanted him released I would have seen to it long ago."

"You mean the monks at Jalung-Dzong will release Rait at your order?"

"At my request," he corrected, pursing his lips.

"Then why not have him brought here?" Grim asked.

Instantly he went into another of his fits of nervousness—he must have been a problem for the monks who had to get along with him—he began swaying on his seat, trying to suppress the hysteria that seemed to seize him whenever his will was opposed.

"I won't have him here! I won't have anything to do with him!" he exploded. "This is my monastery. It is I who say what shall be and what shall not be. It is enough for you that he is to be taken to a certain place, and that I will give you a guide to that place. What more do you want?"

"Nothing," said Grim, "unless your generosity provides a meal for visitors."

"It cooks."

He snorted and left the room again, the stage assassin following, and for a while we sat there with a sense of being spied on, although there was nothing to indicate that we were watched. The feeling was so intense that none of us spoke. We sat and searched the walls for an eye-hole with an eye behind it.

After a while Grim got up and opened the outer door.

"Bad medicine," he remarked to me. "You sit there, Rammy old top. We've got into the wrong pew somehow. I'll explore."

He took Narayan Singh and left Chullunder Ghose with me. The *babu* and I sat listening, convinced we were watched, yet unable to determine where the eyes were. It was probably five minutes before the inner door began to creak and opened gradually. Suddenly a woman stepped inside, shut the door quickly behind her and bolted it.

Some of the Tibetan monasteries are not notorious for morality. Nor had our friend in yellow impressed me with the order of his sanctity. The marvel was, not that a woman was there, but that such a female as the one who leaned against the bolted door and leered at us should have been able to play paramour.

Her mouth was like a gash made with a knife. She was a Tibetan, and of no high rank; which is to say that she was oily, covered with a thick veneer of dirt, and pig-eyed. But she had been told, and she believed, that she was charming; and she set to work to charm Chullunder Ghose and me. It felt like being ogled by Lilith, the she-monster who seduced our father Adam before Eve turned up to make him our respected ancestor.

For the sake of the proprieties we smiled, since there are no worse manners than to air one's prejudices in a foreign land; nor anything, in any place, more dangerous than manners inappropriate to the occasion—as the moralists discover now and then, who

make long faces at the mistresses of kings. I, personally, am a blunderer with women, but Chullunder Ghose is a Lothario. He arose to the occasion.

"Priestess of immaculate maternity, we squirm!" he said. "This *babu* is beside himself."

To me, in English, he remarked:

"No safety in numbers, Rammy sahib. Polyandry is polite custom hereabouts!"

She beamed on him and came a little nearer, he ridiculously conquering an impulse to run, shrinking and then turning the involuntary movement into overacted thrills of ecstasy.

"Chenresi!" she giggled and pointed a thumb at him.

"Krishna! Could my wife but see this!" he exploded.

THE woman mistook that for a compliment and sidled closer. She was coy, no other word for it —coy, with a kind of spiderish determination underneath the "luck-covering" as they call dirt in Tibet.

"Chenresi!" she giggled again.

Then her little bright pig-eyes glanced at me and she began to walk toward me quickly.

However, my alarm was premature. She shot the door bolt home and, after favoring me with one more furtive glance, returned to the more gallant man. After ogling him a moment she sat down on the mat and faced him, almost knee to knee.

"My name is Kyim-Shang."

That statement entitled us to doubt whatever else she might say. Kyim-Shang was the famous queen of Tibet who was daughter of an emperor of China; such names are not bestowed on modern peasants.

Having given her announcement time to sink in, she produced out of the ample storage-space beneath her bulging bosom two gold chains. Then, touching the earrings that weighed down the lobes of her ears, she intimated—or so we understood—by signs that Chullunder Ghose should estimate their value.

"Now you like me?" she asked.

By the grace of such wit as remained to our *babu* he did not say no to her. She took his silence for consent and loosed the floods of speech.

She spoke so fast that I could not make head or tail of it at first, and Chullunder Ghose did hardly any better. But it dawned on her before long that she was wasting time and breath, so she began to talk more slowly and, though her dialect was difficult, we picked out enough words to get the general drift.

She was sick of the monastery. The monks ill-treated her, calling her foul names —although by bringing her there and keeping her they were just as guilty as herself. Black or yellow-robed, they were a bad lot, and there was not much to choose between them, but the *dok-dokpa* were the worst. She said that two-thirds of the monks in that monastery were *dok-dokpas*, and the head lama was afraid of them.

"They tried to drop rocks and ice on you," she went on, "and he knew it. But since you got here with a right guide, he is afraid to let them kill you now. Yet the only way he can prevent it is by promising to have you killed by some one else. So in the morning he will send that man to Jalung-Dzong to warn those monks to lie in wait for you."

"Why do the *dok-dokpas* want to kill us?" I asked.

She ignored me but answered my question as if Chullunder Ghose had asked it:

"They are afraid you will tell tales about them that may reach the *Kün-Dün*,* who might send them a lama who can really discipline them. Between flattery and threats they can manage this old fool."

I asked another question and she answered without turning her head to look at me, her idea, I think, being that Chullunder Ghose might possibly be jealous.

"Do you know anything about the *chiling*, who was called Lung-Tok, who was taken prisoner and sent to Jalung-Dzong?"

"Everybody knows. He tried to learn the secrets of the Dugpas. Now they learn his. And if they catch you they will learn yours."

"Mother of modesty, why do you think we were guided to this place?" Chullunder Ghose asked her.

"I don't know," she answered. "But you will be guided to your death from this place unless you listen to me."

We listened eagerly enough, she thawing toward me and even talking directly at me as it began to penetrate her understanding

*The Dalai ama.

that the *babu* did not mind. Nevertheless, she rather resented his lack of jealousy.

"Go forward—go backward—or remain here; you will be killed! You must escape tonight, and there is nobody except me who will show you how. You must leave those other two, and you must do exactly as I tell you."

She beckoned me, fingers downward, signifying I should sit a little closer although farther from her than Chullunder Ghose. Then with lowered voice and her head between Chullunder Ghose and me, she spoke slowly, repeating such words as she thought we did not understand:

"Leave the ponies—no good. Each man carry barley. Tonight—I come—you follow."

She laid three fingers on her lips for secrecy, stuck her tongue out at Chullunder Ghose, and, with a sidewise leer at me, suggestive of a crumb of patronage, scrambled to her feet and left the room by the inner door, moving much more silently and swiftly than she looked capable of doing.

Her aroma remained, however. I did not know what to think, and as Chullunder Ghose was obviously going to ask me what I did think as soon as he had finished flapping away the smell, I fled into the open air in search of Grim, intending to repeat the woman's conversation to him, without comment, while it remained fresh in memory.

NARAYAN SINGH was pacing up and down outside the stables, stamping his feet and flapping his arms to keep warm. He looked worried and relieved to see me, glancing at the sky that was already almost dark and at the shadows deepening in every corner of the courtyard. He kept hitching his sword-hilt forward.

"Jimgrim went in there," he said, jerking his thumb over his shoulder toward the stable door. "He bade me wait."

I opened the door and called to Grim. There was no answer and no sound except from the ponies. It was very dark in there so I struck a match. No sign of Grim. I struck another one and went to examine a pile of sheepskins over in the farther corner; there were deeper shadows there but I drew them blank. Narayan Singh, framed in the doorway, assured me he had seen Grim enter the stable. I told him to come and look for himself, but he refused.

"Nay! Jimgrim bade me stand guard."

I struck more matches and looked everywhere for some other way out of the stable, even pulling aside the heap of sheepskins. But at the back there appeared to be nothing except solid cliff, into which the roof-beams were set, and in the other three walls there was only the one door. I returned to Narayan Singh and questioned him, but he stuck to his story.

"Jimgrim went in there and closed the door. Nay, I do not know why. Nay, I heard no sound. On my honor I have not slept. I have stood here as he bade me, and he has not come out."

I told him about the woman and what she had said.

"One woman was already bad enough," he commented. "That hag who led us here was a mother of mischief. I looked into her eyes and I saw mockery. If there is another woman meddling, it is time we made ready for trouble."

Narayan Singh seemed in a nervous, superstitious mood and kept on glancing at the deepening shadows. It was clouding over and there were no stars visible. I shut the stable door and told Narayan Singh to keep a sharp look-out for Grim while I would go and bring the *babu*.

Nothing in the world was darker than that courtyard by the time I crossed it. I could hardly see the door into the monastery, but I could hear the monks at prayer, murmuring responses to an accompaniment of bell-ringing and the blare of a radong. It was pitch-dark in the room where I had left the *babu*, but I heard voices whispering and as I entered he spoke aloud:

"Nay, pearl of purity, I swore a vow never to offend against a virgin. He whose name is Rammy shall offend first. Here he comes."

He clutched my arm, the woman pulling at his other sleeve; and although I could not see I could hear him try to thrust her away from him, she resisting.

"Rammy sahib, this mountain of corruption—this chasm of stinks says we are to go now while the monks are all praying. She has brought two bags of barley. She says, unless we follow her the yellow lama will imprison us."

I told him that Grim was missing and that my plan was to get the ponies ready.

He agreed. He would have agreed to anything to escape from the arms of that Tibetan woman.

"But unless we let her come with us she will have her revenge—which might possibly be sweeter to her than herself," he remarked. "She would certainly spread the alarm."

Abruptly he commanded her to gather up the barley-bags and carry them. She grunted as she hove the weight of one of them and called to him to help her lift the other, but we strode out and left her to follow or not as she might choose. She dropped the bags and overtook us, taking our arms and forcing herself between us.

"Never mind!" she exclaimed. "Never mind! I will go back for the barley. You wait in the stable for me."

She followed us toward the stable door, recoiling when she saw Narayan Singh loom out of shadow.

"Tsa-a-ah!" she exclaimed. "Where is the other one?"

Narayan Singh laid hold of her.

"Aye where!" he answered. "Mother of abominations, you shall stay until we find him!"

She let loose a peculiarly modulated yell. It was not loud but there was terror in it. Narayan Singh opened the stable door, thrust her through backward and closed it again.

"No sign of Grim?" I asked.

"None, but I have faith in Jimgrim. He will turn up."

"Let's be ready for him when he comes," I said. "You'd better help us load the ponies."

He demurred, having orders to stay where he was; but I saw no sense in his standing there, since he was twice as good as Chullunder Ghose at managing the ponies in the dark. I told him I took the responsibility and he went into the stable, muttering. Chullunder Ghose went next; I went last, and shut the door behind me, since the monks might have a watchman on the prowl.

Then I felt in my pocket for matches and shook the box. And suddenly a man's voice close beside me exclaimed—

"No!"

A hand like a steel vise clutched my arm. Chullender Ghose gasped. I heard an oath from Narayan Singh and then the swish-swish of his saber. Then a cut-off scream. I did not doubt it was the woman's.

CHAPTER XX

PRISONERS

I STRUCK out right and left into the dark. I was surrounded. There were other men who moved among the ponies, whispering, and I was sprung upon from behind by men who struggled to tie my arms while another drove his thumbs into my throat. Chullunder Ghose cried out for help, but some one struck him on the head and after that he made no sound. Narayan Singh fought like a catamount somewhere in among the ponies that lashed out with their heels at random; he kept shouting to me to use my pistol, but with two men on either arm I could not reach it.

Suddenly he shook himself free and used his pistol, getting in two shots before they rushed him from behind. I heard the pistol knocked or dragged out of his hand; it struck the wall not far from me. Then I went down under half a dozen men, whose greasy bodies stank of the accumulated filth of years. My muscles cracked as they got the cords around my arms and I cried out to Narayan Singh to save himself and find Grim if he could. An invisible hand struck me hard over the mouth, feeling for it first with thumbs and fingers, and a voice growled in Tibetan:

"Silence!"

Narayan Singh had received my leave to go. He went like a whirlwind. Some one—very likely he—had loosed the ponies and they milled around the shed, he clinging to the mane of one of them. There was tumult in the dark, and then, in what seemed like a second he was gone, through the shed door. A voice I thought I recognized commanded in Tibetan—

"Go after that fool and kill him!"

It was like Grim's voice! Somewhere in the darkness close to me Chullunder Ghose recovered his stunned senses just sufficiently to murmur "Jimgrim!" Some one hit him on the head again and he lay still. With four men holding me face downward, I could only move inch by inch, but I contrived to get a glimpse of night sky through the open shed door and, against it, a man's figure. He was staring out into the night, watching the men who had pursued Narayan Singh. Even his figure looked like Grim's.

Cords were cutting my arms; men knelt on me and I was half stunned—in no fit state to trust my senses: but it was hardly

likely I should not know Grim. A sort of madness seized me as the conviction grew that Grim had gone insane. I began to struggle, until a blow on the back of the head reminded me to lie still.

The man in the doorway laughed; and it was Grim's laugh. Presently he closed the door, but struck a match and lighted a cigaret. Then instantly, by the flare of the match, I recognized him.

He was wearing Grim's clothes—native Indian khaki underneath a yak-skin overcoat. He came and stood over me, raising my chin with his toe, then struck another match to let me see him.

I hated him less for that indignity than for having made me think, for one mad minute, that he was Grim. His beard was gone; the long black hair that he had worn over his shoulders when we saw him last had been tucked inside the yak-skin cap, but he was unmistakably the man who threw me backward in Sidiki ben Mahommed's house in Leh—the same of whom I dreamed between the gods' knees in the cave above the hall of stalagmite. His look of tigerish masculinity had vanished with the beard, but I could see he was taller than Grim, now that he stood naturally, and when he squatted down close to me, cross-legged, it was with the same effortless, slow movement—as if he had been lowered by an unseen hand. He appeared to be proud of that trick.

"You were looking for Rait? You shall see him," he said.

He appeared to expect me to answer, and laughed cynically when I did not.

"I can read your thoughts more easily than understand your clumsy accent," he remarked in perfectly good English.

But it sounded more like a boast intended to make me lose confidence in my own senses.

"You poor super-hypocrite!" he sneered. "You are not a typical example of the West; you are its architype; you are its perfect specimen! You funny parrot of inverted morals! You muscle-maniac! You straw in the wind of misdirected energy! You make me laugh, you poor, unpigmented, blind checker-on-a-board! Now listen:

"Your Jimgrim is done for. You were warned in the letter Rait wrote you not to bring him or that sabered imbecile Narayan Singh. You brought them in spite of the warning, so their blood is on your head. Not that it matters. The world is richer for the loss of two such fools.

"You are a bigger fool than either of them, and how we're going to smash the shell of your stupidity is something of a puzzle; however, we will do our best, and if you break up with the shell, it won't much matter.

"I gave you credit for being a bit less stupid than you are, and intending to trap you I put on Jimgrim's clothes, at you don't know what disgusting inconvenience to me. They reek of his smug self-righteousness."

I LAY still. The cord on my arms was slipping and I hoped to get a hand free and break his neck. But one of the men who was kneeling on me felt at the cord and tightened it so sharply that I winced.

"Ah!" remarked the man in Grim's clothes. "Pain is a great educator. If you had Rait's imagination we could make much more of you, I don't doubt. We tortured him mentally. You won't suffer more, but differently. The result won't be so efficacious. To reach mind through the body is to lose by indirectness. We shall never be able to make more of you than an assistant for your friend Rait.

"How you do make me laugh! Now you lie there and believe you are enough a man to hold out and to disobey us after we have finished schooling you! Rait thought himself too clever. You think yourself too obstinate. Well, you shall see what we have made of Rait in hardly any time at all, and that may help you to yield without quite so much suffering—although we don't believe in sparing the initiate. We stamp pain on the memory and kill out even the suggestion of a possibility of mercy.

"You are going to learn, in your degree, my friend, how true is your identity with nature, who is red in tooth and claw, and not the merciful, wise mother that the sentimentalists so moralize about."

He gave me the impression he was merely passing time until it was convenient to make his next move; and he confirmed it when the men returned who had been looking for Narayan Singh. They whispered to him and he gave a sharp command I did not catch.

Immediately the men who knelt on me began to kick and drag me to my feet and I heard others striking and prodding

Chullunder Ghose. I was dragged out through the doorway and compelled to walk through the gap in the court-yard wall behind the man in Grim's clothes.

My captors were all monks in sheepskin overcoats and there were at least a dozen of them following me down the trail, so I could not see what happened to Chullunder Ghose, though I could hear considerable noise. And when, at last, we reached the bottom of the long descent and halted near the *chorten* at the entrance, it appeared that they had dragged him all the way down on his back with his hands tied and a rope passed through his armpits. The man in Grim's clothes prodded him until he stirred, then turned to me.

"Understand," he said, thrusting his face close to mine, "that there will be no nonsense about sparing you. You're coming. You're coming on foot. Try to refuse and you will be tortured. You will not in any case be carried or allowed to die."

He began to search my pockets leisurely, transferring all their contents to a bag that one of his monks carried slung by a strap. When he found my automatic pistol he laughed as if it were a baby's toy and held it up for the monks to be amused at. One of them showed the pistol he had taken from Chullunder Ghose and another, seizing it by the barrel, cracked me over the shins with it.

NOTHING hurts more on a cold night than a blow on the shin. My legs were not tied. I kicked him, putting all the beef and lift into it that I could muster.

It was not long before I wished I had controlled that impulse. Though I broke a couple of his ribs he was a tough, determined expert in malignity, and all the pain the broken ribs caused he repaid to me twice over on the march, with greater will because the others laughed at him.

The man in Grim's clothes led the way, striding along as if leagues were yards. My captors ordered me to follow next, and the monk whose ribs I had broken took another man's staff to lean on, but used it more often to prod at my heels from behind—a species of torture far more irritating than the pain of the rope on my wrists. When I turned on him I was tripped with the staff, knocked down and then struck until I got up and resumed the march.

In the darkness twenty yards behind me more than a dozen monks were bullying Chullunder Ghose. They dragged him on his back until the agony of that awoke his stunned brain and he scrambled to his feet. Because he cried out then they put a rope around his neck and jerked it, beating him when he stood still for lack of breath.

For a while the wish, inspiring faint hope that Grim was not dead and might bring Lhaten and some of those other mysterious individuals to the rescue, kept me from jumping over the dark edge of the ravine whose direction we followed. But the more I thought of Grim the more conviction grew that he had been killed. How else could the man in front of me obtain his clothes?

And as for Narayan Singh, what chance had he? The odds were ten to one that those who had pursued him found and killed him. He could not have hidden in the monastery. There was no way to escape except by that zigzag descent, on which pursuers would have the advantage of pursued all the way down. I did not doubt that Narayan Singh was dead.

That pessimistic outlook once accepted, the exasperation of being prodded on the heels at every third or fourth stride nearly broke down reason. Death was tempting, if for nothing else than that it would deprive my captors of the fun of torturing me further; it was infinitely preferable to the thought of being made mad to the extent that I would yield my will, which seemed to be their object.

There were a dozen places where I might have jumped off before the men who drove me could prevent. I even pretended to worse fatigue than I actually felt, in order to get them used to my sudden stumbling so that they should not jump too quickly to prevent me when I made my mind up—a thing that, when left to myself, I am habitually slow to do.

I am not afraid of death, although I have the ordinary healthy man's mistrust of suicide as any way out of a difficulty. The thought that Chullunder Ghose would have to face the misery alone if I should take that dark plunge to oblivion was what in the end prevented me. I decided to wait, and endure, and leave the problem up to him. If he should prefer suicide we would break through the veil of death together; if not, I could probably endure what he could.

Then I remembered Mordecai's brave break for liberty across the passes, and it

seemed to me that though he died before he reached home he had won a finer fight than any I ever took hand in. I made up my mind I would endure until the end, whatever that might be, if only because Mordecai had done it.

Strangely, after that the thought returned that Grim might be alive and that Narayan Singh might possibly have found him. I could not imagine how Grim's clothes could have changed ownership without his being taken prisoner or killed. But even the uncertainty was better than the pessimism of despair, and I even began to use caution not to go too near the edges of the yawning chasms that we passed.

Long before morning Chullunder Ghose made an attempt to kill himself. He had a rope around his neck, which would have hanged him or else dragged two monks to death along with him, if he had reached the edge of the ravine in time. But they were too alert. They threw him to the ground and beat him mercilessly, rubbing snow on his face and neck when he lost consciousness.

AFTER that they tied the two of us together, since the *babu* could hardly drag himself along, and they prodded me persistently and flogged me with the knotted ends of ropes whenever I tried to rest from the strain of supporting a man heavier than myself.

The man in Grim's clothes never troubled himself once to turn and look at us. He appeared to be sure his men would carry out instructions, and when the coldest dawn I ever knew began to color the surrounding peaks I only caught one glimpse of him, a mile ahead, after which he vanished.

By that time Chullunder Ghose was in delirium, moving forward almost automatically; all I had to do was to support him, but the little strength I had left was hardly equal to it. The prodding no longer hurt. What little landscape I could see was swimming in a mist of blood-red. I could not feel my wrists and supposed they were frozen, but did not care. I decided at last to lie down and be beaten to death, forgetting the man's threat that I would not be permitted to die; but it took thought an awfully long time to convert itself into action, and we reached a cave while I was still telling myself what to do. I felt as if I were talking to another fellow, whom I pitied.

The man in Grim's clothes waited for us near the cave-mouth. I had lost sense of direction and nothing seemed to stand still long enough for me to see it properly; the only thing that really registered in my exhausted brain was that Grim's clothes were too small for him and that he looked like a cad without his beard. He had a pointed chin, with a twist that I thought might straighten if I hit it hard enough; and his eyes, instead of being leonine, looked more like a hyena's.

"How is that for a beginning?" he asked. He gave me a shove that sent Chullunder Ghose and me both sprawling on the cave-floor. Then he stooped to examine my wrists and ordered one of his men to cut the rope and chafe them, but he did nothing to prevent the man whose ribs I had broken from continuing to prod me with the staff. I could not use my arms, and when I tried to kick I found I could not aim straight, which made them all laugh and they prodded me from every direction for the fun of it.

Chullunder Ghose was totally unconscious, lying on his face. The man in Grim's clothes produced what looked like a silver pocket-flask from the bag into which my pockets had been emptied, pulled out a wooden stopper with his teeth and, turning the *babu* over with his foot, poured a few drops of liquid on his swollen lips. Almost at once he began to recover and tried to sit up but was promptly knocked down again.

THEN it was my turn. I was dragged to the rear of the cave and held while the man in Grim's clothes forced some of the liquid through my set teeth, driving his fingernails into my gums to make me yield.

"That is *soma*," he said when he had forced me to swallow a few drops.

The stuff was tasteless and had no noticeable smell, but its effect was almost instantaneous. My whole body became so perfectly at ease that I was hardly conscious of it and my brain became abormally active. The red left my eyes. The cave, and everything in it were as clear as if etched with a pen.

"Now think!" he commanded.

Instantly the journey from Darjiling, including Benjamin's store in Delhi, the Zogi-la, Mordecai, Sidiki ben Mahommed's house and every other detail, came to mind

in one uninterrupted panorama. As in dreams, when there is neither time nor place, and events occur simultaneously without being superimposed or intermixed, I saw everything in a moment.

I felt as if my will were bound with cords, exactly as my hands had been. It was agreeable to have that lucid mental vision, yet it felt like something stolen and a baffled impulse to resist it totally offset the feeling of exhilaration.

"Now you see," said the man in Grim's clothes. "Nothing has occurred of your volition. Rait wrote to you to come. You came. It would have made no difference which route you took; we would have caught you. Rait, who has ten times your capability, had to strive for seven years to find our lodge and gain admission. We made him work for it, and spared him nothing. After there was nothing left in him that could even wish to play us false he had the right to choose his own assistant. He chose you, so those letters were written to tempt you to try to rescue him. We understand men's weaknesses. And now, if you have it in you, you are going to be made fit to go to the United States with Rait."

The stuff he had forced through my teeth had made me speechless. I had will enough remaining to resent his cocksure impudence, but not even the desire to speak.

"Now take this into your mind," he went on. "You are going to be hurt and tired until the senses lose control of you and what you have always believed is your own will dies forever. When all that nonsense about virtue has been dredged out—you are going to be taught as much as you are capable of learning. You are to be a foil for Rait and that shall be the goal of your ambition. So, until you yearn with all your faculties to be obedient to Rait there is going to be only enough peace and relaxation to make agony more keen by contrast.

"Mercy is stupidity and there will be none. I will give you one hint how to ease the strain, because you may break under it otherwise and that fat Bengali you have brought with you would make a poor substitute. So remember:

"The agony won't last so long if you make up your mind to accept what is being done to you. Resign yourself to the inevitable, and begin to try to see the possibilities."

He strode away. I saw him talking to Chullunder Ghose. Gradually, minute after minute, pain returned and presently there came the monk whose ribs I had broken, to prop himself against the cave-wall and instruct three others how to torture me by prodding at my stiffened muscles.

THE monks ate breakfast in a group, devouring meat like wild beasts, but the man in Grim's clothes stood alone with his back toward me, so that I could not see what he was eating. I began shivering with cold and every movement was like a knife-stab because of the pain in my muscles, but a monk came and pulled off my overcoat, using a dagger to slit up the sleeves and save trouble.

After that the man in Grim's clothes fed Chullunder Ghose, and then me, telling half a dozen monks to hold me while he forced a measured quantity of filthy cheese into my mouth; it tasted as if mixed with axle-grease. When I spat the stuff out he scraped it from the floor and then got hold of my tongue, the way a horse is dosed, forcing the mess down my throat with his fingers while one monk held my head between his knees and another kept a rock jammed tight between my teeth.

My overcoat was then slit up with daggers and they gave me part of it to wear around my stomach, tying it in place with strips cut from the coat itself.

"That will keep you alive without making you comfortable," said the man in Grim's clothes.

At a sign from him they gloved my hands before they tied my wrists again. Then I was dragged on my back to where Chullunder Ghose lay and made fast to him by the knee and ankle, after which they kicked us to our feet and made us walk like men in a three-legged race.

They had given the *babu* something to restore vitality and he did not lean his weight on me so much as he had done during the night, but we were fagged out and so nearly hopeless that the thought of suicide again occurred—to both of us at once.

"Rammy sahib, let's jump!" he whispered. "There's a good place."

There was ice on the edge of a shelf beside the track, that sloped toward a sheer drop of a hundred feet, with naked rock below. It looked actually friendly and inviting. The suggestion we should make the

jump together gave the touch of sympathy that makes men kin.

But we were too dog-weary to jump suddenly, and as we turned toward the edge the monks behind us saw what we intended. We were knocked down and belabored pitilessly with blows ingeniously gauged to cause extreme pain without inflicting too much injury. The man in Grim's clothes retraced his steps along the track to stand and laugh at us.

"Wait until you begin to want sleep!" he remarked as we were dragged to our feet. "Then you will know what misery is."

He turned his back and led on, while the monk with broken ribs resumed his prodding with the staff. It was as if his words were a magic spell that opened a new door of torture. The desire to sleep stole over both of us at once, and the incessant pain shot through the stupor like electric stabs, compelling wakefulness.

At times we almost fell asleep and stumbled, but then blows were rained on us and we were brought back to our senses by the pain and the concussion. The worst of it was that our legs were tied together; we trod on each other's foot unless we kept up a torturing effort to keep time and swing together, and each felt so sorry for the other that it was heart-breaking to inflict an added injury.

The monks who followed close behind us noticed the care we took not to hurt each other and one of them, shoving us out of his way, ran to overtake their leader, obviously telling him about it, showing him in pantomime how we were trying to avoid each other's foot. He merely nodded.

Later, when they let us rest under the shelter of a rock and we both fell asleep almost instantly, he had me awakened by rubbing snow over my face. He let Chullunder Ghose sleep, but he sat down on a sheepskin with his face thrust close to mine and, leering at me, sneered:

"You will learn that pain and pleasure are two opposites of one emotion. Therefore you will inflict whichever you choose with equal carelessness. Friendship and enmity being also opposites of one emotion, you will hurt your friends and soothe your enemies. You will do anything except make a fool of yourself by being sentimental."

Chullunder Ghose's strength was so much less than mine that we had to rest repeatedly on his account; but that never happened until he actually dropped beside me and, his leg being fast to mine, I was unable to go forward. I have no idea what speed we made, or what distance we covered. It was a waking nightmare, in which I trudged over endless miles of mountain track, supporting Chullunder Ghose by a rope passed around him and over my shoulder.

I CAN shut my eyes now and see visions of the precipices that we skirted and of the slippery, ice-encrusted rocks up which we climbed, some of the monks tugging at me from above and others prodding from beneath. Chullunder Ghose has no memory of that march; he can hardly recall to mind the cave in which we spent the next night and where I was not allowed to sleep.

It was a cave where boiling-hot and icy-cold springs flowed out of the rock some fifty feet apart and blended into one stream near a ledge, over which they plunged into a gorge and froze among the rocks. They let Chullunder Ghose lie, but they stripped me naked and dragged me back and forward through the current, so that I was alternately chilled and scalded.

The effect was to rid me of pain for a while and to increase the craving for sleep. But they prevented sleep by tying me, stark naked, to a steam-wet rock above the hot-spring; when I yielded to the sleep I slid feet-first toward the boiling water and was brought up with a jerk, just clear of it, by the rope under my arms. In that predicament I stayed until the dawn loomed in the cave-mouth through a veil of falling snow.

By that time I was sullenly obedient, aware that I would lose my reason if I wasted will on anything but clinging to the little reason that I felt I had left. Dumbly, in a sort of mental haze, I watched them beat Chullunder Ghose awake and feed him by forcing uncooked meat into his mouth, twisting his fingers until they nearly broke to make him swallow it. Whatever he spat out they gathered up and fed to him again. Then they made him drink hot water from the spring.

When my turn came I ate without resisting and the man in Grim's clothes seemed to misinterpret my obedience into a willingness to yield to him; or possibly he thought that I had no will left. I had not the ability to formulate a plan. I knew that, if I should escape, it would mean certain

death on a blind trail; cold, starvation or a false step would swiftly make an end of me. But by a sort of half-slumbering instinct, that felt like a maniac's cunning and frightened me, I discerned his weak point. He believed that he had me conquered. Then I knew—or think I knew—how madmen feel who watch for opportunity to play tricks on their guards.

Dissimulation was the keynote of it. I obeyed him when he ordered me to put my clothes on. With the thought, I think, of testing me he came so close that it seemed a simple thing to kill him; but I knew he would never have done that if he had not felt perfectly sure of himself. I did not let even a glimmer of the hate I felt for him escape me. When he turned I saw a weapon like a black-jack in his right hand.

I pretended to be perfectly indifferent about Chullunder Ghose, standing silently beside him while they tied his leg to mine and seeming not to notice when they beat him until he yelled because he pulled his leg away when the rope touched the place it had chafed the day before. When the *babu* spoke to me I did not answer. When the man in Grim's clothes kicked me as a signal to begin the day's march, I obeyed the signal without showing the least symptom of the rage I felt.

IT WAS the *babu's* turn to bear the brunt of the exertion. He had had a night's sleep. Though his bruises tortured him and the cold wind stung his broken lips he had recovered something of his strength. He labored manfully to make my share of the exertion less, supporting me where I had previously had to bear the double weight and whispering, as often as he dared, such brief words of encouragement as he could summon from the depths of his own misery.

"This *babu* loves you, Rammy sahib— Be the sahib— All's well that ends well. —— take hindermost— There is a gray cloud to every silver lining, so let us be brave— Am personally feeling better—oh, yes, much."

The thought that he was now the stronger brought out all the man in him and even helped his body to recover from exhaustion. Possibly they had given him something in his food to restore vitality, but it was manhood—the good, stout-gutted stuff we white men like to think is our monopoly—that made him do his utmost to encourage me, by whispering at the risk of being beaten for it and by kicking my ankle to keep me awake, to save me from being beaten when I fell asleep. And when I did fall asleep on the march he supported me, not letting them discover it—until I stumbled and woke up again.

I never moved my lips to answer him. I was afraid that man in Grim's clothes might detect the slightest sign of sympathy between us and redouble his attempts to beat the spirit out of me. I merely walked ahead and took advantage of the *babu's* efforts, conscious, somewhere underneath the surface of my mind, of cunning in reserve and of a spark of hope that neither would explain itself nor die.

Chullunder Ghose weakened again before we finished that day's march. We climbed over the shoulder of a mountain where the wind blew so that we could hardly force ourselves against it. On the far side there was soft snow into which we sank to the knees, and that finished both of us as far as any further possibility of effort was concerned.

We fell and lay still, though they beat us; and at last, when the man in Grim's clothes ordered it, they tied a rope around the two of us and dragged us down the far slope, with another line tied to our feet to steer us and hold us back. Our hands were tied, so we could not fend ourselves away from lumps of ice that lay across the path. Long before we reached the bottom I was stunned; but I remember, very vaguely, being lowered down a precipice head-first and swinging over chaos gray with whirling snow. I think I was still leg-to-leg with the *babu*, but neither he nor I are certain about that; we were both so near unconsciousness that our brains received no definite impression.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE MESSIAH OF BAFFIN LAND

An Article

By Patrick Lee

IN THE archives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, at Ottawa, is a remarkable series of reports and depositions which tell vividly a story such as has never before come out of the region where the ice pack groans in the agony of eternal thralldom; such a story as even the North has never known.

Although enacted in the tiny Eskimo village of Kevetuk on the east coast of Baffin Land in the winter of 1921-22, it was only recently, through the reports of the men of the Mounted Police stationed in the far North, that the world came to know of Neakoteah.

There is little, perhaps, to show Kevetuk as being any different from the rest of the native Eskimo villages in Baffin Land. Less favored, perhaps, than the settlements on the shore of Cumberland Gulf, two hundred miles southward, or Pond's Inlet and Clyde River, three hundred miles nearer the Pole, but nevertheless a prosperous little community, with abundant caribou in the mountains, salmon in the rivers and many seal on the ice-covered surface of Home Bay in winter.

So prosperous was Kevetuk that a trading company built a small post there and made Kownung, wife of Neakoteah, its trade agent, to fill the storehouse with white fox furs in exchange for the knives and tobacco left by the visiting schooner each summer.

But in spite of this Kevetuk was isolated. No settlement stretched northward for many miles; southward was only a scattered village or two, each almost as isolated as Kevetuk itself.

Years ago missionaries had established themselves at Cumberland Gulf and spread the Christian doctrines throughout southern Baffin Land. Even at Pond's Inlet, the most northern native village in the seven-hundred-mile length of the huge Arctic island, missionaries for a time had sowed the seeds of Christianity.

In between, in villages like Kevetuk and Kekertalukjuak, the Word had spread only by means of a few books, translated after a fashion into Eskimo and written in the shorthand script invented for the natives by one of the visiting missionaries.

By this means, or by laboriously passing from one native to another by word of mouth, losing a great deal and gaining much in the passing, Christianity spread.

As the years went on, a great deal of what the Eskimos had learned from the missionaries had become so distorted that those reverend gentlemen themselves would find their own teachings hard to understand, changed, elaborated, and explained by one native to another, each after his own fashion and in his own metaphor.

And so it was with the Kevetukmiut. The parables, the stories of Jonah and the whale, the killings, the bloody battles of the Old Testament were far more comprehended than the story of salvation. "Jesuee" was just a little difficult to understand.

In the days before Christianity came, second-hand, to Kevetuk, Neakoteah had been an *angakok*, a medicine-man, given

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to the rites of Tornasuk and the gods whom the Eskimos understood far more fully than ever the white man's Christ. It is only natural, then, that the coming of the new religion should find Neakoteah ready to assume the position of leader in the worship of the new faith.

Neakoteah possessed probably the only missionary books in Kevetuk. It is even possible that he was the only one who could properly understand the new writing; and therefore he gave to his fellow tribesmen his own interpretation of things incomprehensible to the others.

Since the appointment of Kownung to the post of district manager for the Sabellum Company, Neakoteah's power had increased three-fold; at the time of the tragedies in the awful winter of 1921 his power and influence was at its height.

Neakoteah's success as the interpreter of the new faith was instantaneous. The natives eagerly nodded when he told them the story of the Ark; of the great Flood. Had they not seen the huge *oomiaktoaks* of the white men during the whaling season? They hailed with delight the story of Jonah and the whale; it was a distinct improvement on the legend of Kaig, the Mink, who went herring fishing in Hudson Bay and was swallowed by a great fish but managed to cut himself free with a knife.

As for the universal brotherhood of man, it was the keystone of the natives' political economy. In a land where food caches were community stores, where reciprocal trust was born of the necessities of environment, "love thy neighbor" was not a command but an expediency.

What the result would have been normally is difficult to surmise, but in the light of subsequent events it must be presumed that early in the autumn preceding that terrible winter Neakoteah's brain snapped.

For months he had worked himself up, into a religious frenzy approaching madness. He, Neakoteah, would be the saviour of Kevetuk—the Jesuee of Baffin Land.

WINTER was fast approaching. Thick blizzards kept the men from hunting, and the darkness of the Arctic winter night made each family huddle closer to the yellow flame of the seal-oil lamp burning in each tiny igloo. Neakoteah could not have chosen a better time.

Early in December came the aurora borealis. Neakoteah seemed strangely affected by the Northern Lights, and was seen to raise his arms to the sky and cry—

"I have seen the sign, and I will obey."

The following day Neakoteah gathered the rest of the Eskimos into the Red Storehouse, owned by his wife's employers, the Sabellum Trading Company, and announced his message of enlightenment and instruction.

On a wooden box which had once contained trade-biscuit, Neakoteah preached his first wild sermon to a wondering group of forty of his fellow natives.

Kevetuk, he told them, had been punished by the Lord for its wickedness. There were fat salmon in the lake at Tikkekahn. Why then did not they rise in winter to the fishing-hole? Caribou were plentiful last year at Home Bay. Why were the hills now devoid of a single track? Northward at River Clyde, when seals were shot, four out of five floated; here at Kevetuk, nine out of every ten sank when they dropped back into the water.

And three men were blind at Kevetuk. Many more had sore eyes and failing sight. Why was it?

No one could answer.

That first sermon was but one of many frenzied outpourings delivered in passionate tones by the fanatical Neakoteah. Each ache and pain, brought on by the melting snow in spring, was attributed by the evangelist to the wrath of God. Even the accident to the Sabellum Company's ship, the *Rosie*, which was forced on the rocks of Home Bay the summer before, was attributed to the wickedness of Kevetuk.

Neakoteah called upon his people to repent. Kevetuk, he shouted from his biscuit-box pulpit, was forgotten of God. Kevetuk was wicked, forsaken, doomed, unless the people listened to the voice of Neakoteah, their saviour, their messiah.

The effect was instantaneous.

With a guttural roar, the people acclaimed Neakoteah as the direct representative of Nakongmek himself—through him Kevetuk should be saved.

In an instant the old gods were repudiated, secretly as well as openly, this time. Henceforward the people would listen only to Neakoteah—all but Kidlappik.

Kidlappik and his wife Okee were relatives of the *angakok*, but Kidlappik could

not bring himself to believe that what the evangelist told the people was true. Nothing but harm could come of it. He doubted the wisdom of the "messiah" when he ordered the hunters to pray instead of searching for food. He became the only agnostic in Kevetuk and kept apart from the remainder in the solitude of his igloo.

But the seed was sown, and bearing fruit. The old gods were completely abandoned. Henceforward the men of the village were to be known by the names of the disciples of Jesus Christ, taken from the Bible. He, Neakoteah, was to be known as Jesuee, for he was the Christ of Kevetuk.

There was a wild orgy of dancing after this last meeting. Hymns were sung and the people, worked up to a state of frenzy almost equal to that of Neakoteah himself, left for their igloos to talk over the happiness which was to be theirs if they only accepted and obeyed Neakoteah.

Kidlappik, alone in his igloo, pondered the strange happenings in his mind, and planned to move to Igloolik, or Cumberland Gulf in the spring, rather than put up with the madness of the man who called himself God. To fellow hunters who came to see him, he shook his head and said—

"It is not good for men to take the place of God."

A few days later, Neakoteah went sealing with Yaksan, a devoted follower. They killed five seals, all of which floated.

"It is because I have given you a good spirit," Neakoteah told Yaksan, who spread the good tidings on their return to Kevetuk.

Neakoteah had performed his first miracle.

After this Neakoteah became strangely abstract in his manner, pondered long over his religious books and, as the maniacal fervor grew, took to walking among the people with a loaded rifle. They did his bidding in fear and trembling.

Kownung, who at first doubted her lord, became his most devout disciple after he had beaten her until she was heard to cry that he was indeed her saviour. Under instruction, the women of Kevetuk made long gowns of trade cloth for the master which, together with a green paper crown, he wore at the religious meetings.

On the walls of Neakoteah's temple, the Red Storehouse, hung a calendar, a gift of the trading company. The twenty-fifth of December was ringed with crayon, and Neakoteah told the natives it was *yorgli*—Christmas—his birthday. On that day, he promised, the celebrations in the temple would be more elaborate than ever before.

ON CHRISTMAS morning excitement was at fever heat in Kevetuk. The natives blackened their faces with soot from the seal-oil lamps. The older natives, whose lips were pierced, put on their labrets, made of jadite. The women attired themselves in their best fur and finery. Even the children wore some touch of trade finery.

The coal stove in the Red Storehouse was hot; round the building several seal-oil lamps were burning.

The festivities were commenced with dancing, in which everybody joined but Neakoteah, who came in his flowing green gown and paper crown. He was in a sullen mood and walked about muttering to himself, a Bible in his hand.

When the dance was at its height, Neakoteah left the "temple." When he returned he carried a large basin, loaded with gifts. these he threw to the floor, and as the people scrambled for them, exclaimed—

"I am throwing pearls to swine."

The dance was resumed and became more furious than ever. Sweat rolled from the faces of the contestants, and they began to throw off their clothing. Presently several of them were dancing naked.

Kidlappik, the agnostic, stood by dourly. The whole village had gone mad. Never before had such a spectacle been seen in Kevetuk. He saw his friend Takoshaga leaping up and down, crying at the top of his voice:

"How joyful! How joyful!"

He approached and drew him to one side.

"Why do you act so?" he asked.

"Because I am frightened of Neakoteah," panted Takoshaga. "If we do not dance he will kill us," and he resumed his frenzied caperings.

Neakoteah took his place in the center of the shack, mounted an empty biscuit box and yelled—

"Listen!"

The beating of the drum ceased. The dance stopped. The people congregated about him.

"I will speak of Jesuee," he cried.

"Jesuee! Jesuee!" howled the natives,

pressing toward him with exclamations of adoration and worship.

From among them he singled out Yaksan.

"There will be a feast, Yaksan," he announced, and left the Red Storehouse.

He returned shortly with a quantity of beans, flour, oatmeal and dried caribou meat. Yaksan took the food and, in a large blubber boiler, prepared the soup ordered by Neakoteah.

While the soup was cooking, Neakoteah read to the people out of his Eskimo Bible. Then from the folds of his gown he took out a large cross fashioned from paper and nailed it to the wall. He then stood up so that his body covered the cross and extended his arms in the simulation of crucifixion.

"Like this Jesuee was nailed to a cross," he cried.

The natives set up a loud wailing and lamentation. They clustered about him, knelt down and kissed the hem of his robe.

"Kowtuk and Kedluk shall be my disciples," Neakoteah proclaimed.

The two Eskimos shouted for joy. He summoned them before him.

"You must do everything I ask," he said.

They fervently agreed.

Neakoteah then appointed Takoshaga his messenger to carry his edicts to the people, assisted by Noyohaveeng and Seeming.

Hereafter, Tokashaga was to be known as Markee, Noyohaveeng as Paulee, and Seeming as Simonee. The women of the village were to be known henceforward as Mary, Ruth and other Biblical names, by command of Neakoteah.

Then came the feast. The natives gathered about the steaming cauldron and ate their fill. Then there was more dancing, more hymn singing, and then, babbling, half hysterical, the Eskimos crept back through the darkness of the arctic night to their own igloos, confident that God would save Kevetuk through the medium of Neakoteah.

ALL the next day Neakoteah spent alone in his igloo, studying his Bible. There were things that he could not understand, especially certain passages which referred to the love of all people for each other.

He held council with his disciples, Kowtuk and Kedluk, and decided upon the literal interpretation of the Word. Then Neakoteah went from igloo to igloo saying to the natives:

"Henceforward there shall be no husbands and wives in Kevetuk. You are all to love each other, for so it is written."

Henceforward, with the exception of Kidlappik and his wife Okee, the natives obeyed the order. The details of the orgies which followed, as reported afterward to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, can not be described.

One day, after a sermon, Neakoteah decided that a miracle was necessary to increase his hold over the people. He had told of the healing of a blind man by the Saviour and announced from the biscuit-box pulpit that he, Neakoteah, the new Jesuee, would do likewise.

After the sermon he ordered old Mongeuk, who had been blind many years, to step forward. Neakoteah ordered him to come close, and the aged Eskimo obeyed. Neakoteah began to massage his eyelids.

"Can you see now?" he asked.

Mongeuk tried, but could not see.

"Do you want to live?" asked Neakoteah.

"Yes," whimpered the old man.

"Then you have but one hope. If I can not make you see, your life will be taken. If I do make you see, you will be spared."

He then commanded the wondering natives to sing hymns and continued to massage Mongeuk's eyes, blowing on them with his breath.

"Can you see now?" he asked finally.

After a pause Mongeuk whispered—

"Yes."

A shout of joy went up from the people, but Neakoteah was not content. He held up a Bible in his hand and asked:

"What have I here?"

Mongeuk was unable to tell him and he became angry.

"You have been thinking bad thoughts or perhaps you have a demon inside; that is why you can not see. You shall be killed."

A loud, menacing wail from the natives was silenced with a gesture of Neakoteah's rifle.

He summoned Kowtuk and Kedluk. They were friends of the old man and pleaded for his life.

"We will take a trip on the sea ice. Harness the dogs," ordered Neakoteah ominously.

The old blind man was then placed on the sled and the little party set off seaward. There was little light and soon after they started a blizzard came. Several miles

from shore Neakoteah stopped the sled and spoke to Mongeuk.

"Can you see now?" he asked. "Do not lie to me, for I will know."

"I can see," whimpered Mongeuk. "Truly I can see."

"Very well," replied Neakoteah. "If you can see, find your way back to the village again. Then you may live."

He ordered Kowtuk and Kedluk to throw Mongeuk off the sled.

Then the dogs were turned and the sled started back through the darkness of the blizzard to Kevetuk.

Mongeuk was never seen again.

A DEPRESSION fell over the village when the party returned without Mongeuk. The first ecstasy of religious frenzy was beginning to die down and the natives began to lend a more willing ear to the advice of Kidlappik.

Fear of Neakoteah now took the place of devoutness and religious piety. Trading on it, Neakoteah called them to the Red Storehouse and said:

"I am Jesuee. Soon the end of the world will be here. It is so written in the Holy Book. We must prepare for it. We must fast."

He then ordered that none of the natives should go hunting and, armed with a rifle, patrolled the village to see that his edict was obeyed. Later he even ordered that the natives should not eat, and was obeyed in fear and trembling.

Kidlappik alone, sitting at the door of his igloo, rifle in hand, saw that his wife and children ate.

Finally Neakoteah determined to test the faith of his flock. He summoned them to the "temple."

What happened there is related in the deposition of Yaksan, made to Corporal McInnes of the Mounted police two years later.

"He (Neakoteah) had a sharp knife in his hand," Yaksan told the interpreter, Constable McGregor. "He went up to each Eskimo and put the point of the knife against his breast and said, 'Shall I kill you?' Each Eskimo in turn replied, 'Yes, kill me.' Then Neakoteah would say, 'No, you are a true believer. You believe in God.' When this performance was over, he got a rifle and asked each one again if he should kill him. Each replied, 'Yes, kill me,' and then he would say, 'No, you believe in God,' and pass on to the next. When this took place Neakoteah wore a terrible face and looked as if he were very angry.

"Kidlappik, Okee and their children were not present.

"That night none of the people could sleep because they were afraid the end of the world was coming, and because they were starving."

A sudden obsession seized Neakoteah to kill the dogs, and he issued an order to his disciples that three animals of each team in Kevetuk were to be killed, as propitiation to the Lord and to save the village.

The people, weakened and half crazy themselves, roused from their attitude of utter servility to protest. Neakoteah had but one answer:

"Do not be afraid to kill your dogs. The Lord will provide."

Practically it meant extinction for the tribe if Neakoteah should order more dogs to be killed. The massacre of the animals is described in a statement made to the police by Takoshaga.

"I was in Neakoteah's igloo and heard him tell Kowtuk and Kedluk to shoot the dogs," related Takoshaga. "Kedluk was to hold the dogs while Kowtuk shot them. I did not witness the shooting of the dogs, but later I saw the bodies of three that had been shot in the head.

"One dog belonged to Neakoteah. He was lying in the snow in front of Neakoteah's igloo and one of Kedluk's dogs was lying in front of Kedluk's igloo. I do not know who owned the other dog. All day there were shots and many dogs killed. Some were stabbed with knives. The people were afraid they would all be killed and stayed in their igloos.

"I was in Neakoteah's igloo. He took up his rifle. I thought he was going to shoot me, but he fired a shot through the wall of the igloo. 'I am God,' he said. 'I am making thunder.' I ran out and saw Kidlappik. He was very angry and he was firing his rifle into the air. I asked him why he was doing it and he replied, 'I am killing the angels.' I was afraid Neakoteah would hear him and kill us both. I ran away."

The mounting hysteria of the natives practically turned into insanity. No one knew whose turn might come next. The starved Eskimos hid in their igloos. Many

were too weak to attend the meetings Neakoteah frequently called in the "temple."

About this time Neakoteah became convinced that he must baptize the people in blood before his time came to be crucified. The ceremony is described in Yaksan's testimony.

"The next day Neakoteah entered my igloo very quickly," Yaksan told. "I saw bloodstains on his shoulder and I thought some native had cut his right ear off. He said to me and my wife, 'Do not be afraid, come to my temple.' We obeyed, and there were only a few there. Neakoteah was standing in front of the window. He told me to look round his head. I parted his hair on the right side and found a wound about an inch long. There was some dried blood on his hair. He told all the natives present to look at the wound.

"The cut was then washed by Noyohaveeng. Neakoteah told Noyohaveeng to dip his finger in the bloody water and make the sign of the cross on each person present. 'You are being baptized in my blood,' he said. After this was over, he told us we could go.

"All that time I was almost insane with worry and fear of Neakoteah."

One day Neakoteah summoned his disciples Kowtuk and Kedluk to his igloo.

"You are no longer disciples," Neakoteah told them. "You are angels. You will henceforward live with me and be my messengers. There is an enemy of God in Kevetuk."

The news spread that a human sacrifice was to be made. Yaksan heard that he had been singled out as the victim.

One of the messengers, Seeming, came and told him he was wanted. He went, trembling, to Neakoteah's igloo. He had no thought of resisting. His wife and two children accompanied him to the house of the "master."

What happened is related in his own deposition:

"When I entered the igloo, Neakoteah was in bed. He raised his face from the pillow and made an awful grimace, opening his mouth widely and sticking out his tongue. He said to me, 'Yaksan, what do you see inside me?' To save myself I lied and said, 'I see light inside.' He then went through the same performance and he asked me what I saw, and I lied again and said, 'I see light.'

"My heart was beating violently. Neakoteah called Kowtuk and Kedluk and told them to chase me to my igloo and beat me. They followed me to my igloo and there Kowtuk struck me three blows on my back with the flat of his knife. I was kneeling on my hands and knees at the time and I said to him, 'Thanks,' for he did not kill me. I then shook hands with Kowtuk and Kedluk and my wife, for I was very thankful to be alive. They then left the igloo."

Yaksan's lies had saved his life, and Neakoteah was still unappeased. He must have a sacrifice. Seeming had been the one to take the message to Yaksan. He should die.

The fate of Seeming is described by Peneloo, who reported it months afterward to the men of the Mounted Police.

"Kowtuk and Kedluk took Seeming out on the ice. Kedluk held him up while Kowtuk killed him by driving a big hunting knife into his body two or three times. They did not like to kill Seeming. Each man closed his eyes as if asleep while they were killing him. He died slowly. Kowtuk and Kedluk returned. Neakoteah asked if they had killed Seeming and asked to see the knife. When he saw that it was covered with blood he said that it was all right.

"Seeming's body remained on the ice. Neakoteah said it was accursed and ordered the people not to bury it.

"The dogs ate the body of Seeming."

THE drama of religious fanaticism was drawing to a close. Neakoteah sent a messenger to bring Kidlappik to his igloo. The rebel came, rifle in hand, to answer the "master's" summons.

Neakoteah had nailed a caribou skin to the wall. He pointed to it.

"This is Jesuee," he said. "You do not love Jesuee. Stab him with your knife."

He handed Kidlappik a knife. Kidlappik threw it violently to the ground.

"I will not stab the caribou skin," he shouted. "And I will not stab any of the natives. You are not Jesuee. You are only Neakoteah, an *innuit* like the rest of us. The people will not forget what you did to Mongeuk, and the murder of Seeming."

Neakoteah did not reply. He raised his arms, dropped his head forward on his breast in an imitation of Jesus on the cross.

Kidlappik looked at him standing thus and left the igloo.

For a while Neakoteah waited in silence. Then, muttering to himself, went outside and across the snow to Kidlappik's igloo. The hunter had left for his trap lines. Only Okee was within.

"Kidlappik has crucified me," said Neakoteah. "Come with me."

Okee, frightened by the bloodshot fanatical eyes of the evangelist, cowered against the snow wall of the igloo. Neakoteah seized her by the wrist and dragged her out of the dwelling.

Okee's screams brought a dozen natives from the igloos. Kidlappik turned his dogs from the trail and raced back to the village, tugging at his rifle lashed in its sealskin cover on the sled.

Yaksan stood by Neakoteah's igloo. He saw Kidlappik halt his dogs, raise his rifle and take careful aim.

A moment later he saw Neakoteah staggering along toward the sea ice, a few yards away.

"He was singing," Yaksan afterward told. "When I saw him he raised his coat and deerskin shirt and I saw a fresh wound on the left side of his body. There was a little blood. He seemed very pleased. As he rubbed the wound with his *kilitang* he said, 'I am Jesuee and I can not be killed. Glory be to God.' "

Turning, Neakoteah staggered toward his igloo and fell dead beside the snow door.

Yaksan could not believe that Neakoteah was dead. A sort of ecstasy came over him. He believed he would witness a resurrection.

"I bent over and looked at his face," he told. "I saw him open his eyes and roll them. I pulled him into the igloo. I heard the Primus stove hissing and the boiling water in the kettle singing a song, 'Keegow-you.' I heard the sound of a musical instrument being played, but did not see who was playing it. The sound came as if from heaven.

"Then I went out and told the people Neakoteah was dead. Jesuee of Kevetuk was no more."

There was much rejoicing at the news. At once the spell was broken. A feast was prepared and each native took a gift to Kidlappik and thanked him for bringing peace once more to Kevetuk. Sanity, in a flash, returned to the natives and the horror of Neakoteah's reign of terror was forgotten.

After the feast, Takoshaga, Kidlappik and Yaksan washed the body of Neakoteah and wrapped it in caribou skins. Watching, the hungry dogs waited for another feast such as they had enjoyed when Seeming was killed.

But it was not to be. Kevetuk had already forgiven Neakoteah. Every respect was paid his memory, for he had once been a great *angakok*.

A rude coffin was built of biscuit boxes, and a shallow grave scraped in the earth on the frozen shore of Home Bay, half a mile from Kevetuk. There Neakoteah was buried.

A stick was placed in a pile of rocks at the head of the grave and on it in Eskimo script Kidlappik wrote:

HERE LIES NEAKOTEAH
IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MEN TO TAKE
THE PLACE OF GOD

WITH GRAPE AND BAYONET

By Ernest Haycox

Author of "Trial by Fire," "A Cup of Sugar," etc.

THE parole for that bleak and bitter Christmas day was "Victory or Death." Sergeant John Trent, frying his pork over a temperamental camp-fire, thought a more significant phrase could never have been coined to describe the situation of the army. Day after day the faint-hearted left the ranks and the sick died by the scores in ice-cold beds. Their food was none too plentiful; a commissary's detail tramped the Pennsylvania countryside and begged for cast-off clothing, for bedding and for shoes, in order that the faithful few might endure the knife-edged wind that swept along the lowlands of the Delaware. Victory or death indeed. One or the other, or mayhap both. Sergeant Trent mentally called the roll of his company and sighed at so many absent names. It was the same in the other companies; the Fourth Virginia Continental Foot had dwindled to a bare hundred and fifty men.

The sergeant pulled a shawl over his shoulders—a shawl donated by some patriot grandame—and packed his meat into a knapsack. That had been the order issued by the colonel this very morning, three days' cooked rations, the blanket rolled and forty rounds of ammunition distributed. Up and down the line of log quarters the sergeant saw others cooking their meat and running about in preparation for parade. It was near four in the afternoon and the gray sky grew momentarily darker, more forbidding. Out of the northeast drove a snow that promised, before many hours, to be a raw sleet. The fire veered and guttered. Sergeant Trent's body shook under a prolonged coughing spell. He pulled the shawl closer about his neck and warmed his hands at the blaze.

"Aye," he murmured. "Victory or death. It's high time. If the general wants an army to fight with he'd better move before the militia enlistments expire. Some of these dogs can't stand more than six weeks' freezing."

The sergeant was no grumbler. That was evident from a face which, despite the deeply embedded eyes and the cadaverous cheeks, bore the imprint of a fine humor. Once this man had been overseer of his southern acres, read a little Latin and discussed the news from London and the price of tobacco in the hogshead. But there was a mild scorn apparent as he watched a detail of straggling militiamen wander through the Fourth Virginia regimental street, bound for Dickinson's brigade near the river bank. They hadn't the stamina of his own well-starved and well fought comrades. They were soft. What they needed was a smashing defeat and a hundred-mile retreat under their belts. That would toughen them.

The sergeant's attention was suddenly turned to another quarter. The newest recruit in the company, a youth of eighteen or thereabouts, trudged forward from a clump of hickory trees much in the manner of one following a plow. He was a somewhat lumpish figure, dressed in roughest

homespun, with a thick smock to cover him against the weather. Strangely enough, he wore no hat; but a mat of black hair fell over a broad, placid face and struck squarely across the forehead as if trimmed by the aid of an inverted mushbowl—as it probably had been. Just a lad in the critical stage of development. An added ten years of uneventful life and he would be another of the slow-moving, slow-thinking countrymen who straggled near the picket lines of the army and asked sly questions. In one fist he held a chicken with a wrung neck.

The sergeant's countenance grew disfavoring as he saw the youth's furtive, self-satisfied grin. He spoke sharply.

"Where, may I ask, have you been the past five hours, against company regulations?"

"Foragin'," replied the youth, extending the chicken. "I got a good fowl, too."

"Stole it?"

"Took it," replied the youth and, seeing the swift expression of anger upon the sergeant's face, he made haste to justify himself. "Well, ain't we doin' the fightin' fer folks? Ain't they got to feed us? They ain't hurt by me takin' one fowl."

The sergeant made a gesture of distaste.

"Your first idea of soldiering, then, is to steal? Do you think the army is organized to raid hen-roosts?"

"No harm," defended the youth stubbornly. "It was some fun."

"Thirty-nine lashes, no doubt, would be some fun, too. That's the penalty for thievery."

Alarm sprang over the youth's countenance, succeeded by a stanch declaration.

"Whip me? No, they won't. I'm a free-born man!"

"As are the rest of us. But you're under discipline."

"I come in of my own will," retorted the youth. "Fer six weeks. If they treat me good, I'll stay. If they don't, I'll go home."

"What interests me," pondered the sergeant, "is what caused you to enlist amid all this discomfort. Why leave a comfortable home?"

"It's mighty dull at home," confessed the youth. "I'd like a little fun, a little fightin'. Then I'll go back and brag like some of the other returned soldiers."

The sergeant plucked at his shawl; his face distorted alarmingly and he broke into a cough that threatened to dissolve his bony frame. The youth dropped his eyes. It seemed as if Death put forth a warning hand. The sergeant caught his breath with a queer whistle.

"Ah, if it were as simple as all that! A little fighting—and then go home."

He extended his arm.

"You've got something to learn, I fear. Give me the chicken."

The youth drew back.

"It's mine."

"Give me that fowl, Housegger!"

The youth tried to meet the sergeant's eyes; there was a flash of steel blue from the well-like sockets and a slow reiteration of the request. The youth's thick lips fell to a pout. He paused, muttered something direful, and thrust his prize into the other's hands.

"Better," said the sergeant and raised his voice. "Oh, Slade."

A passing man wheeled and came up.

"Here's a chicken," offered the sergeant. "You're going by the hospital. Will you drop in and give this to them?"

The youth's round face was crimson.

"It was mine!" he repeated. "Mine!"

"Be still," said the sergeant. "So long as you are responsible to me I'll try to make a soldier of you. Get your blanket rolled and your knapsack in order."

As the youth ducked into the dark hut, the sergeant stooped to the flames and added a billet of wood.

"Aye, if the Lord gives me time I'll straighten the lad. He'll obey orders and he'll rob no more hen-roosts. By and by he'll starve well and come to expect the daily prescription of misery. He'll be able to march in his sleep and forget he ever had a home or that there was such a thing as comfort in the world. Then, by the Lord Harry, he'll be a seasoned instrument."

The sergeant, in common with other faithful members of that small, tough Continental army, had his visions.

Meanwhile the youth Housegger bent over his blanket with a round vindictive countenance.

"It was my fowl. No right fer him to take it."

He had forgotten that the original ownership of the fated chicken was not vested in him; it only mattered that he had been deprived of property. The tenacious instinct

of possession, passed down by German forebears, resented the sergeant's move. He tossed his one or two bits of clothing into the blanket and awkwardly rolled.

"Whip me? He better watch out." He brooded darkly. "Nobody can whip me, and I'll not be bullied by him, neither."

A sudden rolling of drums beat against the wind. A cry was borne forward on successive voices.

"Turn out, Fourth Virginia! Turn out for parade!"

Men invaded the log hut for their equipment.

"Blankets and knapsacks," said one. "By ——, it's cold to stand parade!"

"I'd give a dollar—if I had a dollar—to sit before a turkey this evenin'."

"Shut up, Jenny, you fool! That you, lad? Well, shake into your harness."

Housegger stumbled over the sill and flinched at the unexpected severity of the wind. It stung his face and numbed his hands. Men were lining up. The sergeant's voice reached him urgently.

"Step into the blank file, Housegger."

THE youth took his place with a sullen mien. In front, the captain sang out. Silence fell over the ranks, broken here and there by an uneasy shifting of bodies. The drums rolled again and the fifes shrilled. From the corner of his eye, Housegger saw the colors dip and rise. More orders were flung against the wind; muskets clattered, fell and rose to shoulders, all of which maneuvers the youth copied. A squad of horsemen galloped past, led by a man clad in buff and blue on a chestnut sorrel. The colors came on, whipped violently against the wind. The colonel, from afar, bellowed and in a moment Housegger was taken up in a turning movement, half shoved and half pulled around by the ever-present sergeant. About him was a murmuring of expectant, excited voices.

"Say, Trent, this ain't the way we parade!"

"That was Gen'ral Washington on that big chestnut sorrel nag. What's *he* doin' in front of this mis'ble brigade?"

"Ain't it gettin' dark early? ——, that wind's horrible!"

It was truly that. They were marching northeast and the icy pellets of snow struck them like driving needles. Even Housegger felt the blast keenly and he, fresh from home, was clad in heavy clothes. For the most part, this brigade boasted few outer coats. They had fought and marched in the self-same garments for six months or better, discarding and patching until it was scarcely worth while to mend the remaining tatters. They were sadly in want of shoes; a few had wrapped their feet in sacking and professed a certain scorn for the less inventive souls. Many had draped their blankets around them instead of rolling them. All in all, they made a sad show of uniformity as they stumbled and slipped through the snow, wound out of one road and into another, surmounted a hill and found themselves forming a junction with other troops.

The sergeant was speaking.

"That's Mercer's brigade. Good men. And, by the Lord Harry, I see General Nat Greene coming up. This looks interesting."

Another cavalcade swept by the column in the dusk. Steven's brigade—this was the brigade to which the Fourth Virginia was attached—led the augmented force onward, deserted its former highway and entered another. A running fire of comment followed.

"——, this is the way to McKenky's Ferry, boys. D'ye suppose we're goin' back across the mis'ble Jerseys again?"

A repressed groan met this. That last memorable retreat was not soon to soften its memories in the minds of the survivors.

"And leave Philadelphia exposed?" countered another. "Of course not. This is a feint. We'll turn soon enough and dodge back."

"Oh, don't try to be a strategist, Jemmy. What sense'd that make?"

"——, ain't that wind horrible?"

An officer stood, nearly hidden by the swiftly dropping darkness, on the side of the road, delivering a message as the sections passed.

"General Washington's words, gentlemen. A strict silence is enjoined, and no one to leave the ranks on penalty of death. A strict silence, and—"

Housegger bowed his head and tried to cover up his free hand. The fingers holding to the gun butt ached miserably; his feet were beginning to chill, despite the steady motion. And for all of his solid body, he began to tremble. There was no withstanding the steady onslaught of that wind. Of a sudden it seemed to redouble its fury

and deadliness; the head of the column surmounted a roll of ground and slid down a slope. The rending and crashing of ice swelled on the ear-drums. They had reached McKenky's Ferry. The column flinched and came to a stop.

The night rolled inward and Housegger, looking sidewise at the sergeant with a hostile vision, saw him as a man might see a ghost, with deep, staring eyes and a face all white. The latter spoke:

"You see, my boy, that to fight a battle there must be first some preliminary torture. Ah, that wind! But the battle itself is but a momentary interruption of the strategy. We don't win campaigns by battles. We win by marching around the enemy until he is drunk with bewilderment. This, no doubt, is some of the fun you came to share with us!"

Housegger shook his head and tried not to think of his rapidly congealing body. What was the sergeant saying? It sounded like the speech of old crazy Ike who roamed from farm to farm in Buck's county and forecast the coming of the Doom. Making fun of him, was the sergeant? The youth fanned the coals of his anger and mumbled his threat.

"Can't give orders to me! He'd better watch out!"

The column advanced ten feet, stopped and crawled onward at a snail's pace. The wind shrieked through a lone hickory tree; the driving snow made the universe appear as a wild, uneasy element without foundation or stability. Housegger felt slightly dizzy.

"By crackers, when we fight I'll make some dirty Englishman pay for this. I'll get my share of the fun, I will!"

He found himself creeping down a slope with treacherous footing. Out of the confusion rose a powerful voice, soaring above the clash of ice and the howling of the gale.

"Steven's brigade, come ahead to the boats! Watch your sections!"

The sergeant clucked his tongue.

"Colonel Knox makes more racket than his artillery. Watch your step, lad!"

The youth looked up. Hard by the river's edge a group of horsemen were gathered in a small circle. A lantern swung aloft, the rays falling on the face and hands of one who rapidly wrote a note in the saddle. Housegger had seen him before, from a distance, and he knew him now with a kind of shock. Here was he whom all the army's faithful spoke of in terms that made them appear to be giving a pledge of loyalty. The proximity of greatness made the youth momentarily forget his misery and to inspect the commander-in-chief with a lively curiosity.

Housegger was not of that breed endowed with acute perceptions and strong imagination; but the setting which surrounded this figure was one which was likely to strike the dullest with a certain impact. The crying and the howling of the wind; the enveloping storm clouds in the brooding sky; the weaving pattern of snow in the air; all these things tended to make a vivid impression. The lantern guttered and the general's cloak flung itself about his neck. Housegger watched him finish the note and hand it to an aide.

At that instant the youth had a clear, definite picture of a face: a square, almost massive face, ruddied by the wind. There was a reflected glint of the lantern light in blue eyes and a revealing of a generous mouth set in calm, deliberate lines. Patience was written on the features of this man more clearly than it could have been inscribed in cold letters in a book. Housegger, slipping past, heard a sonorous, level voice.

"How did you find us so quickly, Major Wilkinson?"

"It was not difficult, sir. I followed bloody footprints in the snow."

The sergeant's voice seemed fainter.

"Did you see him, my boy? Some of these days you may recall his face when you contemplate robbing another hen-roost."

"By crackers!" groaned Housegger, "I ain't goin' to stand bullyin'!"

He fell over the gunwale of a Durham boat. Others crowded in. He found himself behind one of Glover's Marblehead fishermen—that corps which superintended the ferrying—who swore and demanded more room in which to sweep his oar. The boat rocked perilously and drifted into the current. The wind cut Housegger through and through; as he cowered miserably down, trying to shield himself, he heard the warning cry of the pilot in the bow, and the plucking of the swift water at his very elbow. Above all was that urgent, unceasing voice shattering the mystery of the night and giving order to the uncertain groping.

"General Mercer's brigade to the boats! Watch your sections!"

A voice groaned—

"——, ain't that wind deadly!"

WALL, the Tory farmer, had been waiting on the Jersey shore, opposite McKenky's, all the age-long afternoon. There had been rumors of an impending move on the part of the rebels these past three days; there had been, too, deserters. Wall had used both sources to an advantage now apparent. For a man of lesser spirit the vigil would have been unendurable, but Wall was a good wisher of the King's fortunes and possessed a great amount of courage. He wrapped himself in his great-coat, pulled the dead grass around him and waited.

When dusk and darkness merged he was rewarded by the sight of the vanguard of the rebel army crawling over the crest of the opposite bank and come to a halt. Boats glided out of the shadows and presently he heard a tremendous voice bawling directions for embarkment. He clung to his hiding place until he had seen three loads of rebels dumped on the Jersey shore, directly beneath his vantage point and, convinced then of the size of the troop movement, he retreated, climbed a hill to where his horse was tethered and threaded a dim path to a highway. Once upon it he spared neither spur nor horse-flesh, dashing onward toward Trenton.

The ride was long and cold. Twice he had the alarm of stray scouting parties and twice he plunged off the highway to allow them passage; after the second such occasion he struck—seeming very familiar with the region—across country and arrived at another highway. Upon this he made his course until he discovered the beacon lights of Trenton twinkling not far away. Hard upon this came the challenge of a picket post in guttural German. The bulky shadow of a yager advanced.

"Call the l'tenant o' the guard."

The yager bawled something unintelligible which was relayed back on other voices. Presently feet crunched in the snow and a querulous question in broken English greeted Wall.

"Who travels alreaty to Trenton at this —— cold hour?"

"You better give a thought to them usin' this sort o' weather fer their profit," muttered Wall.

"*Ach!* The rebels dare not move in such a storm. But who are you, *hein?*"

Wall leaned down and whispered a word.

"Pass," said the lieutenant. "It is the House of Herr Potts on King Street."

The messenger galloped onward. He passed another yager who forbore to challenge and arrived at a wide space where the two main east and west streets of the village —King and Queen—slid together. He entered the former street. From every window gushed a cheerful flood of light that richly illumined the frosty panes and created mellow patterns on the banked snow. A great deal of noise accompanied the cheer of the lamps; instruments sawed old tunes and voices, nearly all German, rumbled and twined in good-humored speech. At last the messenger arrived at one particularly large dwelling, dismounted and rapped on the door. It was opened promptly by an elderly man with a red face.

"Who be ye?"

"I seek the Dutchman, Rall."

"Left a checker game here, half an hour back. Guess ye'll find him down at Abe Hunt's place. He's fond o' Abe's wine."

"Creation! Don't he never think o' his business?"

"That," chuckled the florid fellow, "I'll let ye judge. If ye find him, say I'm waitin' to finish the game."

Wall got into the saddle and swung up another street whence emerged the same sounds of cheer. The tunes, he recognized, were most of them the same that his German neighbors in Bucks County sang at the festive time. So thinking, he arrived at a less pretentious house and again got down to knock at the door. He had to repeat his summons twice before the portal swung reluctantly open and disclosed a giant negro peering dubiously out into the gusty air.

"Want to see Rall," repeated the messenger.

"De kunnel's bery busy," said the negro. "I'se skasely b'liebs he wants to be distu'bed, suh."

"Don't stand there and argufy!" barked the messenger. "Go in an' say I bring tol'able important news."

The negro shut the door. Wall, rubbing his ears, muttered a mild oath and stepped back to a point where he might see

through a window. He commanded a fair view of a group of men around a long table, warmed by a crackling blaze on the hearth. Some were in civilian dress and some in the black, the blue and the scarlet of the various Hessian regimentals. Wall's gaze quickly found the burly figure of Colonel Rall, a man with a long, arrogant face and staring, heavy-lidded eyes. A row of bottles stood upon the table, the substance from which the group made an hospitable evening. He saw the negro move doubtfully among them and disappear. Presently the door opened again and the negro was shaking his head solemnly.

"Naw, suh, hit ain't possible fo' yo' to see de kunnel. He don' heah me, nohow, bein' bery busy wid de massah."

"Creation," muttered Wall. "Won't the fool stop drinkin' a minute to hear news?"

"Sho sorry. Ain't theah suthin' I kin tell him aftuh he's froo?"

The messenger was not a man to let opportunity slip so easily by. He thrust his foot into the opening.

"I'll see him man to man. This can't wait."

The negro looked ominous.

"Naw, *suh!* You ain't comin' in heah, 'thout the massah says so."

Wall moved fretfully. If he had carried his pistols he might not now be cooling his heels before an impassive ebony hulk. He thrust a fist into his great-coat and brought out a paper.

"Open the door wider, then," said he, in resignation, "an' give me a little light." He scrawled a brief message on the paper. "Hand this to him right off. You hear? Right off."

"Yas, suh. Will do dat. But I skasely 'spects de kunnel am in de readin' humo' now. I'll put it right anundah his nose."

The door closed quickly. Wall buttoned his coat and returned to his horse.

"If the fox turns and runs the hounds down it ain't my fault." He mounted and swore softly at his discomfort. "—— sech a pig-headed critter. Don't think the rebels can fight, eh? The gentleman ought to know better!"

There was a crunching of snow and a clanking of sabers in the dark street. A lantern swung in a rhythmical arc. Wall turned aside. By came the guard relief, heavily bundled men carrying full equipment, musket barrels gleaming as they passed the outthrown rays of light from the houses. They were substantial soldiers, warmly clad and well fed. Wall thought of the rebels crossing the river in the teeth of that vicious storm.

"If Washington comes here he'll find stiff fightin'," he muttered.

The guard relief trudged silently down the street. Somewhere beyond he heard a guttural challenge. A sharp command bore up. Muskets rattled again and men exchanged places; the relief moved forward into the darkness.

FOR nine freezing, endless hours the brigades moved over the Delaware while the wind bore down with unabated fury. The driving snow turned to sleet and bombarded men with greater vindictiveness. The massive floes in the river thickened and rendered each successive trip of the Durham boats a greater feat of navigation. Glover's Marblehead sailors labored unceasingly with pike and oar as the pit of darkness about them deepened to a more gloomy complexion.

It appeared as if the elements conspired to defeat this army; that if there was a battle of arms to be fought the men should first be tried in the crucible of harsh weather. And in all this time the booming voice of Knox resounded from shore to shore, never weakening. Sergeant Trent, standing in the lee of an old barn, could mark the progress of the regiments by that powerful voice as the night crept into the small hours.

"Sergeant's brigade, come ahead! Watch your divisions! Captain Forrest, unhitch your horses and bring the guns down! Moulder's battery behind!"

Trent raised his eyes to the dead black sky and plucked futilely at the shawl. His body had passed the stage where so small a comforter as a grandame's relic could furnish him warmth. He remained for the most part silent, dumbly enduring the misery, but when he heard Knox's voice announce the batteries he emitted a gusty sigh.

"The crossing is complete. Thank God!"

Steven's brigade, being first over, had been detailed to throw out a cordon around the landing place; in pursuit of this duty Housegger cowered by the side of a hickory tree and struggled against the insidious effects of a cold weariness. He had been

stamping his feet and clapping his arms since the beginning of creation, it seemed. The gun grew to be a dead weight increasingly difficult to manage with his numb fingers. Somewhere around midnight he had arrived at a desperate conclusion. He had been a tremendous fool to leave home for all this torture. As soon as they made camp again he would go to his captain and ask leave to turn in his musket and be done with marching.

"I'm a free man," he opined, between chattering teeth. "They can't keep me against my born rights."

He jumped away from the tree and looked warily into the blackness. A pungent cursing wound toward him, followed by a squealing of wheels and the crack of whips. The artillery was laboring up the sharp brow of the hill. A gun groaned past, amid the heaving of horses and of innumerable men shouldering the carriage. A lantern glinted; an officer galloped by, nearly riding Housegger down. He stumbled around in a cold fury and heard the sergeant call his name.

"Housegger, back to the company!"

"He's tryin' to put on authority," muttered the youth, sliding downhill and groping toward a lantern. "Ain't goin' to stand it. He's no bigger'n me."

He wandered from one company to another, rapidly forming in the darkness, until his own officer's voice emerged. A lantern swung to his face and Trent's arm gripped him. A command was issued in a subdued voice. The weary men groaned and braced themselves against the driving sleet. Housegger, bewildered by all the milling and jostling, was pushed from behind. The rank ahead vanished. The march was begun again.

It was like the groping of a blind man. The frozen ground, overlaid by sleet and churned by artillery wheels and a thousand slipping feet had turned to a heavy mud that congealed on the shoes. Housegger bent his back up a hill and found himself playing a weird game of tag with those ahead. The wind was broken a little presently and the youth saw that the army had debouched upon a road running through a stand of hardwoods, their presence made known by a series of low-hung branches that scraped the shouldered guns. For a time the mere motion of his body was gratefully in contrast to the dreary waiting. He began to feel some sense of circulation in his arms and legs. The ranks broke into a running fire of comment.

"Jemmy, you know where this cussed road leads to?"

"Well, it might go to a number o' places. If I was the general I believe I'd—"

"Oh, don't try to play grand strategy. What town's at the end of this pike?"

"Trenton," answered Jemmy somewhat sullenly.

"Trenton, boys! You hear that? We're goin' to Trenton! That means fight. Oh, lord love you, we're goin' to drive the Hushings!"

It became evident to the members of this attenuated army that their destination was indeed Trenton and the discovery acted as nourishment to their spirits. For an interminable time as they slopped through the miring road and flinched against the sleet which now pelted them on the backs and drenched their garments, they talked of tactics and the manner in which they should enter the town. There was mention of flanking movements and frontal envelopment; the supporting value of artillery was discussed. So it was kept up until the drug of weariness stopped their voices and an officer came down the line with a warning.

"The column is dragging out. The general requests you keep closer intervals."

"Seems like the gen'ral asks a lot this night!" growled a voice.

He was met by instant rebuttal.

"Shut up! What you got to kick about?"

Housegger's muscles set to trembling. There was a gnawing sensation in the pit of his stomach. The sleet on his coat cuff had turned to ice and chafed the skin raw. The knapsack banged on his hip; the gun weighed more than ever. Always he strained his thighs against the slushy ground, losing a half step for each pace forward, stumbling into the ruts left by the artillery. He lost sense of time; a moment or an hour, he could not distinguish the difference.

"Whyn't they put them pieces back behind," he muttered. "It tears the road to ribbons, and a man can't walk."

The sergeant's thin voice echoed back.

"When the fun begins you'll thank those guns for being at the column's head."

Housegger's misery spilled over to a gusty phrase.

"You rag me about fun again and I'll jest natcherly raise ——, I will!"

"Save your strength, my lad."

Housegger heard another voice that pulled his shoulders up. A horse sloshed beside him; there was a sonorous, level summons from the saddle.

"Press on, boys; press on."

The column picked up its feet and moved faster. A man groaned—

"How far *is* Trenton?"

Over on the eastern rim a thin aura of light showed. Dawn came bleakly. As the dull moments passed Housegger found the shadowy ranks dissolving to individual figures once more; men with desolate faces and sodden clothes. He was brought back, then, to a more acute realization of his own state. A wild thought passed in his mind that perhaps he might slip silently from the ranks and vanish in the dark fog all about them. There at least would be rest from the incessant tramp, tramp of feet. Even as he thought it relief arrived. A command ran the length of the column; the weary marchers stopped and swayed in their tracks. Another order echoed against the wind, which Housegger could not make out, but the column dissolved instantly and fell prone against either side of the road.

Housegger stumbled a small way into the thicket and rummaged his knapsack. He thought, as his mouth sank into the bread and salt pork, that he had never tasted a finer breakfast. He made no pretense at chewing, but continued to bite and swallow until a powerful drowsiness overtook him. As in a dream he heard gun carriages clanking on another road, followed by the drumming of hoofs.

"Don't they ever stand still?" he mumbled.

His gun slid to the snow and his head dropped back. Older men might nurse their strength, but Housegger's immaturity made greater demands of his vitality. He slept.

The next thing this weary youth knew was a hard pummeling on his chest and a pins-and-needles feeling from his hips downward. He shook his head and murmured—

"Go 'way."

That, however, did him no good and when the constant shaking had brought him partly awake he heard the one voice he had come to detest more than any other man's.

"Get up," said the sergeant. "We keep early hours in the army."

Housegger tried to rise and felt himself paralyzed. The sleet had caked against his face and his arms were without feeling. He saw the column marching onward in the road and a wild flight of hope soared in his heart.

"Ain't able to move," he grumbled. "You go on, I'll ketch up somehow."

"No, my lad, you'll come now. I've vowed to make a soldier of you and I will. Up!"

The youth pursed his lips in hot rebellion; but as he rose and tried to meet the sergeant's eyes he was aware of a stone-cold purpose imprinted on the alabaster face and a temper that brooked no refusal. So he grasped his musket and limped out of the brush, puzzled of mind. The sergeant's visage at that instant had reminded him of another face, with the same expression. He half walked and half ran until he reached his own company.

It was broad daylight. During the short intermission a great change seemed to have come over the marchers. There was a faster pace, one that strained Housegger's aching feet to equal. A certain tension pervaded the air; a certain anxiety hovered on his comrades' faces. He heard muttered words about a division of troops.

"Sullivan's taken half the brigades an' gone by the river road. Did you see the guns he took, Jemmy? Washington stays with us, and that means fight."

Housegger was in dire pain. His feet seemed to have frozen.

"What's the use of hurryin' like this?" he groaned.

"Nutcracker movement. We'll take Trenton from both sides—Sullivan by the river road and us on the upper end. Now if I was the gen'ral—"

"Shut up, Jemmy. You ain't nothin' but a private totin' a rusty musket."

The youth's round face was screwed in agony.

"Crackers! I can't stand this no longer! I got to sit down."

He started from the ranks and found the sergeant's arm barring the way.

"Hate to have you miss the fun," said Trent. "It's just ahead of us."

German anger is a hard, durable anger. The youth's countenance cracked unpleasantly; the heavy lips twisted. And as the

heat rose within him he began to lose sight of the road and conjure up pictures in his brain. He had warned the sergeant about ragging him. He wouldn't stand for bullying. If the proper time came, by crackers, he'd put a ball in that fellow! In the back counties that was the method of ending an insult.

ON AND on they tramped, with Housegger perfectly oblivious to the progress they made or the changes that came over the column. His head was lowered and his feet slogged along unevenly; the farther he traveled the more did his one-track mind resolve upon the act of shooting the sergeant. —— the sergeant! There was a whitish glare in his brain, dotted with dancing red spots. He'd settle the sergeant!

Presently he ran into the halted rank ahead and was startled from his angry reverie. The glare was only snow; the dancing spots were made by the crimson footprints zigzagging in the road. He looked about in surprize. They had left trees behind them and were standing, stone silent, in a highway that ran through open fields. The same raw, sleety wind pelted them on the back. In the sky he saw spirals of wood smoke; through the ranks he saw houses.

Before the youth had time to grasp the import of that scene he was diverted by the sound of sudden firing at the head of the column; a preliminary skirmish round that died in the frigid air and broke out again. Sergeant Trent cried exultantly:

"'Tis the Hessian outguard and we drive them. Now the column moves!"

It moved convulsively, in the manner of man breaking his stride. Housegger slipped through the muck and found new muscles aching. His clumsy fingers reached upward along the barrel of his gun and made a shocking discovery.

"My primin' pan's wet!"

"Then fix your bayonet," said the sergeant, coughing harshly. "It—it will kill a man quite as quickly as a ball."

The monotonous silence of the long, long march had broken. A number of sounds ran through the column; a sharp rattling of accouterments augured the advance companies going forward on the run. The brigadier galloped back along the road with drawn sword and a flushed face.

"We are going into action, boys. Fix bayonets and push on steadily. It is the general's orders. Trenton must be taken!"

From the town echoed the steady roll of drums. Housegger, staring with the sharp curiosity of one who wishes to see the nature of the man against whom he is pitted, made out figures tumbling from houses and scurrying down streets and alleys. A sharp summons split the air; the column crowded against the side of the road. Artillery labored by with a clanking of metal. The regimental flags, furled thus far, ran out and fluttered in the wind before the youth's wide eyes. A more decisive burst of musketry broke the lull. Trent, from his vantage point at the side of the column, announced what he saw.

"Hand's Riflemen advancing."

"Fourth Virginia, come ahead! We're going in!"

Housegger broke into a gallop, bringing his gun down. In some manner he managed to affix the bayonet as he ran. They passed fenced-in fields and a few isolated houses. A squad of horsemen cut across his vision and took place on a conspicuous mound. Again he saw that magnificent, soldierly figure astride the chestnut sorrel, gazing serenely at the town.

Thus far the firing had been of a tentative, skirmishing nature. It was now to attain a deeper note; a cannon muttered in the direction of the river and the ranks broke into faint cheering.

"Sullivan's on time! Hooraw, boys! The Hushings are took!"

"Nutcracker move. What'd I say?"

The report of musketry swelled in Housegger's face; the ranks of the Fourth Virginia broke and scattered, around and between houses, this way and that. The youth, bewildered by the confusion, charged blind-eyed upon a battery of American guns wheeling into position. He was aware of labored breathing at his elbow and a sharp cry. Sergeant Trent spoke.

"Come, my lad, we're going to find the heart of this matter!"

The brigade made a swift thrust into the town, rank after rank breaking upon the obstruction of the houses and pouring through the alleys. Trent and the youth galloped across some one's back yard and dived between brick walls; twenty yards brought them to the core of the conflict, in a street bordered by broad lawns and neat houses. One Hessian regiment, badly

broken, was trying to form here. Housegger caught sight of another regiment doing likewise down nearer the river.

The roundshot and grape from American guns bounded and shrieked in the causeway. From every vantage point echoed the definite report of some concealed Continental's gun. Hand's Riflemen had taken shelter in the cellars and on the porches, wiped their priming pans dry and were aiming coolly. Each moment brought more gaunt, sober-faced men upon the scene. Musket balls whined through the air like hail.

The cannon thundered on; at another angle, from the upper part of the town, a detachment of Americans were rushing in, bent on forcing a bayonet fight. The badly confused Hessians rallied, broke and tried to rally again. A stout figure on horse—one with a long, arrogant face and heavily lidded eyes—shouted encouragement and faced the oncoming Americans.

Housegger saw the sergeant kneel and bring up his musket. He did likewise, but when he pulled the trigger there was neither flash nor recoil. He jumped to the shelter of a near-by porch, wiped the pan dry with his handkerchief and tried again. The heavy kick-back of the weapon sent him sprawling.

"Good boy!" shouted the sergeant. "But don't close your eyes! Take aim!"

Housegger rammed down a charge and spilt a little powder in the pan. There was one young Hessian officer, all gauded up in red trimmings, who waved his sword and sought to collect his company.

"He oughtn't wear such bright clothes," muttered the youth, lining the sights on the flashy uniform. "It's foolish."

He braced himself against the recoil and fired. A bullet smashed the wall by his head as he pulled the trigger. He flinched; the young officer still flourished his saber, unhurt.

"Crackers! I'll fetch him if I got to do it with my hands!"

The tide of battle surged onward. There was no concerted signal, no flourish of drums; but confusion and bewilderment wrought sudden havoc in the Hessian ranks. They crowded into the yards and alleys, retreating toward the rear of the town. Within the space of thirty seconds the houses and coverts disgorged the riflemen. They swarmed in the street and pursued down the alleys, pausing to fire and reload, then press on to better ground.

Housegger's blood was racing.

"Hooraw fer Pennsylvania. I'm goin' to fetch that officer with the red coat!"

A billow of powder smoke rolled up. Housegger saw the sergeant, dimly, striding forward, a fair target for any bullet. The youth felt vaguely disturbed.

"Hey! I'm comin', too," he called, and dashed after.

He caught sight of the redcoat making another stand in the alley, surrounded by a few loyal soldiers.

"I'm goin' to get that Hushing! Come on, serg'nt!"

The officer was turned fairly toward him, with saber outstretched. Housegger had no eye for other objects, nor thought of other danger. The bright buttons glittered, the saber swung menacingly; there was a guttural challenge. The youth raised his bayonet and lunged forward to parry the saber. At that instant another bayonet point came into his vision. He leaped aside with a thrill of nerves and discovered a bearded Hessian bearing down. Gun-stocks banged together. Housegger felt his lips as dry as tinder; there was thunder in his head.

He pressed on, grunting with effort. The Hessian yelled. An explosion struck his ear-drum and a singeing fire ran across his temple. Sergeant Trent crossed his path, wielding his gun as a club. The youth was surrounded by hard-breathing Continentals; in the tide he drifted, watching the officer in the red coat vanish in the mêlée. The sergeant turned a haggard face back.

"Good boy, but don't try to fight too many at a time! Come on, Virginia!"

They clattered through the alley, while the din rose and reverberated around them. The big guns, at three different points of the compass, were served faithfully that dismal morning; they crashed and muttered, a sinister undertone to the swelling volume of small arms. It was a greater noise than Housegger had ever dreamed could be made under heaven. It made him dizzy. His senses appeared to detach themselves from his body. His feet ran on, regardless of inclination. Trent's weaving back was his guide; where the sergeant went he would go. On the river side Sullivan seemed to find it a running argument, for the rattle of musketry spread rapidly through the town.

They debouched from the alley and

found themselves on the edge of a clear field. Trent stopped short, threw up an arm and said in a wild tone:

"By the Lord Harry! Oh, by the Lord Harry! Isn't that pretty?"

On the high ground to the left—across the town from the driving Sullivan—a fresh brigade of Continentals stepped neatly into sight, regiment after regiment in line. It was like a parade, each organization extending its front beyond the previous one, wheeling smartly and marching into the field. The flags whipped the wind.

"The reserve!" cried the sergeant. "Held back for the final smash! Now what, my German friends?"

The issue was not long in doubt. At the far end of the field, bordered by creek and trees, the broken remnants of the Hessian regiments milled about, confused and uncertain. Officers shouted and ran here and there. The fresh American brigade came to a halt. A stray round of shots came from widely scattered riflemen and thereupon a lull fell over the field, broken by sporadic volleys of distant parties pursuing fugitives. Housegger, just oriented to the din, felt light-headed at the swift change. He saw Hessian officers raise their hats on saber points to the air; the German standards went down; rank by rank the soldiers laid down their arms. In the distance a cannon boomed solemnly, dirgelike. The battle of Trenton was over.

Staff officers galloped across the field, held a parley with the enemy and turned back. Housegger, under a spell of restlessness, swung and started diagonally across the field. He had gone but a hundred yards when another squad of horsemen cut an alley corner and came to view. The youth halted, eyes riveted on the erect figure astride the chestnut sorrel. Other officers came sweeping across the ground and all halted not ten feet from the staring youth. He heard a level, sonorous voice speaking.

"General Stirling, you will take charge of the prisoners. Officers will collect their men. We must repass the Delaware at once."

"Colonel Rall, sir, is mortally wounded.

"I am sorry."

"It is very strange, sir. When they took him to his quarters they found a note in his waistcoat, from a Tory farmer, warning him of our coming. He had received it last night and never read it."

"We will go and take his parole. Captain Flahaven, you will take a detail and stave the heads of all wine-barrels you find."

The youth could not remove his eyes from that ruddy, broad face. It had not changed in a single line since that dark hour on the Delaware. In victory as in great uncertainty there was mirrored that firmness and, above all else, that tremendous patience. He heard the general speak again; the whole party wheeled and rode away.

The youth walked slowly down the alley, puzzled of mind. If victory could not make a man glad, could not make him smile, then what was victory for? He shook his head and felt an immense weariness stealing over him. His legs ached, his body was wet and hungry. Reaching into his haversack, he pulled out a piece of damp bread and set to munching it, continuing his progress until he had arrived at the main street of the town. Already parties were rolling wine kegs out and staving the heads, the red liquor pouring into the gutter. The drums were rolling and officers, from afar, shouted for their commands to form. Men began to straggle back, walking slowly, sagged over, spent.

The whole world seemed to have changed to Housegger. The long march was almost as a dream; even the battle began to seem unreal. He looked critically at the street and could not visualize himself as crossing it amid a shower of lead. It was not last night he had crossed the river, but years back. It was long, long ago he had stolen the chicken. In twenty-four hours he had lost his youth. Never again could he look at the world with the same unsophisticated eyes.

Most of this the youth felt, rather than knew, for he was not analytical. But a tear rolled down his cheek and he felt very small and lonely. The bread tasted flat. He stuffed it back in the knapsack and turned to find his company, dreading the ordeal that was before him still. Sergeant Trent walked out of the alley, grinning queerly.

"Why, serg'nt," exclaimed the youth, shocked. "You look mighty poor. Did the Hushings get you?"

Trent stared at him with a dry, windy smile out of eyes that were bright fires in coal-black pits. The man's face was dead white and stamped with a seal that even

the unexperienced Housegger understood. The sergeant would never again see the fair fields of Virginia.

"Bullets, my boy? Ah, no. I'm bullet proof. It's the pipes—the lungs. But never mind. You did well. There's stuff in you. Time will come and you'll be fit for freezing and starving like the rest."

He was near to falling and Housegger, out of pity, reached over for his gun.

"Let me carry that, serg'nt."

"Not yet!" said the sergeant, his voice trailing weakly. "Now, I want your word that you'll never consider dropping from ranks again; that you'll carry the musket so long as the general leads the army."

"Why — yes," said Housegger uncertainly.

"Good!"

Then, as Housegger stood holding Trent by the arm, he understood that familiar cast on Trent's countenance. He had seen it before on the face of the man astride the chestnut sorrel. It was patience, a great, infinite patience that endured all things, sustained by a tremendous conviction and purpose. Housegger shook his head and felt as if he had been caught by an inexorable hand. And, though he did not know it, he had been so caught. The army had taken him. He would fight and march until the struggle was over or he had fallen. He could not escape the powerful, unswerving will of the man who, day by day, gripped the imagination of rank and file and welded them into a compact, redoubtable unit. And in time the youth, too, would carry that very expression of patience.

"Come," said the sergeant, "I hear the drums rolling."

A STRANGE LAW

by Leon Rowland

ON THE island of Tahiti may be seen many fragments of houses, with ends cut away, with verandas gone, houses cut in half, others with iron roofs taken. Inquiry brings to light the information that these forlorn exhibits represent the workings of the French inheritance laws as applied to Tahiti.

In former times, when the head of the family died the title to the property was vested in the oldest child, who conserved it for the benefit of the entire family. But the French laws have done away with this. They decree that each heir shall come into full possession of his share of any property. In consequence the courts at Papeete are congested with litigation. The usual battleground is the homestead, which generally is a wooden building of many rooms crowned by a corrugated iron roof and surrounded by a broad veranda.

The oldest son or daughter holds the fort. The other heirs, after much litigation, establish their right to shares. Then follows a pretty scene. Armed with court orders, saws, chisels and other implements of destructive carpentry, they systematically dismember the ancestral mansion. What is left remains the heritage of the oldest and until he can gather substance to repair his domicile it remains a monument to family disharmony.

HORSE SENSE

A Complete Novelette

by Arthur O. Friel

Author of "Cat-o' Mountain," "Hard Wood," etc.

FROM the shadowy forest Job Briggs emerged into his open fields, lying sere and wan in the pale light of late October afternoon. In one big hand swung a shotgun. His coat pockets bulged with slain grouse.

With a glance at the low sun, he trudged at a smarter gait across the undulating land, heading for the road and his home. As he topped a small knoll, however, he suddenly paused to listen. Off at his right front, where a stone wall and a fringe of thin-leafed brush masked the sandy hill highway of the Traps, sounded galloping hoof-beats. The rapid thumping, momentarily louder as it mounted the steep incline, bespoke panic.

"Runaway hoss!" guessed the hill man.

No driver in his senses would gallop a horse up that curving grade; nor would any horse in his right mind adopt that pace of his own volition. Behind that mad beast might be a woman or a child clinging desperately to broken reins.

In a flash the hunter shed shotgun, coat, and hereditary deliberation of movement. From a standing start he shot into top speed, like a bullet leaving a rifle. Gaging distance and velocity by eye and ear, he dashed toward the wall at an angle which should intercept the fugitive; threw himself over the barrier, crashed through the brush, and popped into the road.

A black horse, wild-eyed and wide-nostriled, plunged at him, then shied. Job, snatching at a loose rein, missed; turned, and sprinted along beside the frantic animal; pounced again, and caught both reins close to the bit. Thereafter he clung grimly until the runaway stopped.

"So, boy, so!" he panted, soothingly. "Ca'm down. So, now, so!"

He had a way with horses, had Job; and under his masterful grip and steadying tones the black quieted. Even as he talked, the captor was observing, with mingled relief and concern, that the carriage was undamaged, but empty. The driver had not been killed or injured by wreck, anyway. But what had become of him?

He asked the horse, which, naturally, did not answer. For a few minutes the hard-breathing pair stood resting and establishing confidence. The animal, although still nervous, now seemed tired and tractable. The man gave more of his attention to the equipage. After an inclusive scrutiny he nodded.

"Uh-huh. I knowed ye come from somewheres outside, ol' feller," he confided. "Ain't no hosses like you into the Traps. Dandy harness, too. An' yer kerridge is spick span. Gorry, look a' them fancy back cushions! Feller that owns ye must be rich, ain't he? An' where'd ye leave him, I want to know? Ye ain't been a-runnin' ever sence ye come up into the Gap, or ye'd of busted everything to flinders on to them sharp turns. Wal, le's go see, ye rambunctious scalawag. Turn 'er round,

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easy like. Whoa! Back! Now come here to me. G'yap! So! Now le's travel."

Side by side, walking easily, the pair went back along the meandering way. Only a couple of hundred yards down the long hill was the Briggs home; a snug little house nestling under big maples. As its owner rounded the last intervening curve he spied three figures; his young wife standing at the roadside, his mother leaning at the door, and, unseen by either, a man toiling up the bumpy highway beyond. The man came slowly, and he limped.

At sight of the erstwhile frenzied beast plodding obediently houseward, the women seemed to relax from tension, while the man first stopped, then hobbled ahead a little faster. Job proceeded with gait unaltered. He and the limper reached the dooryard at almost the same time.

"This yore hoss, mister?" greeted Job.

The dusty stranger grinned cheerfully at the hillman.

"He was, and I guess he is again, thanks to you," he returned. "Looks as if I'd have to watch him closer hereafter, if I want to keep him. When he feels like traveling alone he can spill his driver quicker'n a wink."

He grinned again, his gaze roving over the stalwart uplander, the blossom-cheeked young woman, and the thin-faced old one. With his left hand he lifted his sand-smeared hat. His right gripped a large black traveling-bag, also streaked with dust. He was powdered, in fact, from head to foot, as if from a fall into the road. Dust and dirt could not, however, conceal the fact that he was well dressed. His smooth, untanned countenance was that of a prosperous business man.

Job, after a quick survey, chuckled responsively; not because he was a respecter of clothes, but because he liked the fellow's good-humor. Then he glanced up at the meek horse.

"Wal, he's got over his tantrum now, mister," he said. "Handles jest like a lamb. What started him a-runnin'?"

"That's what I'm wondering. I was just leaning down and moving this bag away from my feet—it kept sliding over from where I wanted it—and all of a sudden I was standing on my neck in the road and he was gone. It was all over before I knew it was beginning. Say, rascal, what did you do it for, hey?"

THE horse flicked his ears forward, looked at him with great dumb eyes, and tossed his head. The owner laughed quietly, and all three of the hill folk smiled with him. His jovial acceptance of the situation, and more particularly his lack of rancor, warmed their hearts. Many a man, in like case, would have avenged himself with unmerciful whip.

"I ast him 'bout the same question, but he didn't tell me nothin', neither," laughed Job. "Likely a rabbit hopped outen the brush an' scairt him, or somethin' like that. Hosses is funny critters. Wal, ye better come into the house an' git washed up a mite."

"Oh, no, I don't want to bother you—Umph!"

The stranger, taking a brisk step toward the carriage, cut short both sentence and stride with a groan and a grimace of pain.

"——!" he added, half under his breath. Then, ruefully—

"I wrenched this leg a little when I did that high dive over the side." Another tentative step. Again he winced.

Job's wife, aptly named Mercy, looked quickly at her man. He did not catch her look, but he spoke her thought.

"Come in an' git some liniment on to that leg 'fore it gits wuss. Or mebbe ye've got a sprain into it somewheres; ye'd ought to look an' see. Ye ain't into no shape to drive away now. Why don't ye stop 'long of us till mornin'? We've got an extry room, an' ye're welcome."

The other hesitated, glancing down at his bag, on which he had not once relaxed his hold. Job's eye, following his, observed that the gripsack was stoutly made and had a strong lock.

"How's the road to Ellenville?" asked the traveler.

"Ellenville!" The Trapsman stared. "Gorry mighty, mister, ye can't git to Ellenville tonight! It'll be dark into another half an hour, an' that road— Say, ye ever been to Ellenville?"

"No."

"Thought so. That road, mister, is wicked. Ellenville lays way down into the Roundout valley, an' 'fore ye git to it ye've got to drop down two thousand foot, with the road a-squirmin' like a snake an' steeper'n a roof. It takes a stiddy hoss an' a good driver to go safe down that pitch, even

into the daytime; an' at night it jest ain't possible—not for a feller fixed the way you be. If ye'll take my advice ye'll stop right here."

"M-m-m, well, all right. I wanted to see a man over there tonight, but if it can't be done it can't, and I'm much obliged and sorry to bother you, Mr.—"

"Briggs. 'Tain't no bother. Git into the house an' set. I'll put up yer hoss. Tchk! Come on, boy!"

The horse came willingly barnward. While unharnessing proceeded he stood docile—until his temporary master sought to take out the bit. Then he winced and backed. Job, wondering, soothed him, removed the bridle, and examined the soft mouth. His lips narrowed.

For a moment he stood still, studying the animal from sensitive nose to plumy tail. Then he slid a firm hand down and under the ebon barrel. Again the creature shrank suddenly from his touch, sidling off. Job stooped and scanned something he had found on the dusty belly. When he straightened he was scowling.

Without speaking, he completed his preparations for the comfort of his charge, gave him a reassuring pat on the shoulder, and left him. Entering the house, he found his guest conversing genially with the elder Mrs. Briggs. The unexpected visitor now had removed the traces of his tumble and, comfortably seated, was smoking a fragrant cigar. Close beside him rested the black bag.

"My name's Aiken," he vouchsafed, automatically tendering the mate of his own cigar. "I'm in business in— D'you happen to be acquainted in Albany?"

"Nope." Job turned the cigar with unaccustomed fingers, then laid it aside to smoke after supper. "Albany's a long ways, an' I never went so fur north."

"I see. Well, that's where I'm located. Robert S. Aiken, real estate and investments. You ought to come up sometime and see the city. Any time you do, look me up and I'll entertain you right. You can find me easy enough—I'm right across from the State House, and everybody knows me."

"Uh-huh. Thank ye. I might git up there sometime. Ain't ye doin' nothin' for yer leg? Mom, where's that liniment?"

"Right under yer nose, on to the table," pointed out his mother. "Mercy's a-fixin' up the spare room, an' he says he'll wait. 'The longer ye wait the wuss it'll git,' says I. But o' course it's his own leg an' he can do what he wants to with it."

"Oh, it's only a wrench," Aiken protested. "There's no sprain, and a few minutes won't make much difference. Guess the leg twisted when I went over, and pulled a muscle out of place."

"Uh-huh. Wal, I want to use that liniment m'self a minute while ye're a-settin'."

Taking the bottle, he stalked out, leaving unanswered his mother's quick question as to the nature of his ailment. After frowning a minute the old woman surmised:

"He must of spraint some o' his own muscles, the way he went skedaddlin' after that hoss. I 'clare to gracious, I never see him jump so quick. I was a-watchin' him outen that winder, a-traipsin' 'long home, slow an' easy-like, an' all to once he warn't there no more. There was jest a streak a-goin' 'crost the field. An' jest then the hoss come by, lickety-larrup, an' says I, 'Oh laws, Job's a-tryin' to head off that critter an' he'll git hurt—' "

"A fine boy, ma'am," broke in Aiken.

This was the second time he had heard of what she had seen and said.

"A real man. You ought to be proud of a son like him. And he's a good farmer, too, I'll bet. You've got a fine-looking place here."

"Oh, we don't have to worry 'bout where our nex' meal's a-comin' from," she rejoined, pridefully. "Job, he's smart, an' we've got some money put by for a rainy—"

"Your room's ready, Mr. Aiken," interrupted Mercy's voice.

Cool, calm, she entered the room, a slight shade of displeasure on her brow as she glanced at her loquacious mother-in-law. Aiken hesitated, as if wishful to continue the conversation on the present topic. Then he arose, took his bag, and hobbled toward his chamber.

When he was gone the younger woman said quietly:

"Mom, it ain't necessary to tell folks what we've got or ain't got. That's our own business."

"Wal! I guess I can say what I'm a mind to," tartly countered her senior. "There ain't no harm into lettin' a prosp'rous feller like him know we ain't pore. An' he'll sleep better for knowin' he's into a 'spectable house, him an' his vallyble switchel

that he hangs on to so tight— I wonder what he's got into it?"

"That's his business. An' he don't have to be told he's into a respectable house; he can see it his own self. You let Job do the talkin', Mom."

With that she turned to her supper duties. The elder woman sniffed sharply and pursed her wrinkled lips, but held her tongue.

MEANWHILE, Job, armed with the more-or-less infallible remedy which, according to its label, was good for virtually all hurts of man or beast, gently doctored the black horse. When he had finished his ministrations he returned the bottle to the kitchen, and, with only a brief inquiry as to the whereabouts of Aiken, went out again. Back across his vacant land he walked to retrieve his abandoned gun and game. Thereafter, he walked, not homeward, but off at a downhill tangent which brought him to the road some distance below his house. The tracks of the runaway were plainly marked. He followed them down to the foot of the hill. There, in the last light of day, he examined a confusion of hoofprints, all at the same spot; the marks of human feet, and the course of the wheel-ruts. As he plodded back up the road in the gathering dusk his forehead was creased.

At supper he was taciturn, leaving the conversational field free for his guest. The latter improved his opportunity, talking much, yet telling little concerning his personal affairs. It was apparent, however, that he was city born and bred, for his references were constantly to city people and city pleasures. A rather odd type of man, Job felt, to come driving through this isolated hill section and seeking a small town like Ellenville. Moreover, a traveler from Albany could reach Ellenville much more quickly and easily by rail, changing trains at Kingston.

When the table was cleared and cigars were aglow, the mountaineer casually asked—

"Did ye drive down all the way from Alb'ny?"

"Oh, lord, no. That's too far to drive. I had some business in Poughkeepsie, and I went there by train. Then I got word that a man I wanted to see was in Ellenville, so I just started driving across. They told me this was the shortest way."

"Uh-huh. Yup, it is, from P'kipsie. That hoss ain't yourn, then?"

"Yes, he is. I got him in Poughkeepsie from a fellow that's been owing me money for quite a while. He said he couldn't raise cash enough to square up, so I took the horse and buggy to make up the balance."

"Uh-huh. I see. Ye ain't drove much, have ye, mister?"

Aiken gave him an odd glance, but grinned.

"Oh, don't rub it in. I know I got spilled, but—"

"That ain't what I mean. That hoss has got a tender mouth, an' ye've been a-hurtin' it. He ain't no liv'ry-stable plug with a cast-iron jaw."

"Oh." Aiken seemed nonplussed.

He smoked a minute or two, looking repeatedly at Job.

"Well, I'm glad you told me. I'll be more careful. I don't want to hurt the old fellow."

"Course not. Mebbe 'twas jest that hurtin', though, that started him a-runnin' away."

A probing stare from the city man. His host was idly watching a smoke-wreath crawl away in the lamplight.

"No, that wasn't it. If I'd had a tight rein on him he'd never have dumped me. That was just the trouble—he had his head."

Job made no rejoinder. A tiny glimmer came and went in his black-lashed eyes. He blew another smoke-curl and contemplated its convolutions. There was a silence until his inquisitive mother decided to ask a question or two.

"Was ye a-goin' to buy some land over to Ellenville, mister?"

"Oh, no." Aiken laughed indulgently. "In real estate I only handle city properties. This is a little investment proposition. The man I'm going to see wants to invest in—in a sure thing that I happen to be handling."

He flicked off an ash, changed position, and rubbed his injured leg.

"Say, that liniment of yours is good stuff," he went on, as if seeking to change the subject. "I can feel it taking hold in good shape."

Mrs. Briggs, however, was not to be deflected.

"What kind of a thing d'ye call a sure thing?" she quizzed. "Seems to me there ain't nothin' sure, 'ceptin' death an' taxes."

"Ha, ha! Well, maybe you're right, Mrs. Briggs. But some things in the investment line are about as sure as anything. And it's investing in those things that makes people rich. They make their money work for them, and that money makes more money—lots of it."

"But what kind o' things? Outside o' land an' buildin's an' timber there ain't no—"

"Buildings and timber can burn down, and land's no good unless you can use it or sell it. And you never make money quick out of any of them. Securities are the thing; shares in somebody's business, you know, or in a railroad or a mine— A good gold mine, now, can give you back five or ten times as much as you put into it. That's the way the clever fellows make themselves millionaires, investing in things like that, instead of taking a miserable little four per cent. interest from a bank. I've made a good lot of my own money that way. I—uh—maybe I'd better not have said that, seeing that I'm a bank director myself. But it's true."

$ THE family stared. He looked a bit embarrassed.

"Ye—ye b'long into a bank?" blurted the old woman.

"Two of them," he admitted. "That is, I tell them what to invest in. I'm—well, something of a big man in my own town." He said it modestly enough. "But, just between ourselves, I don't put any more of my own money into banks than I have to. I know what they'd do with it, you see; so I do the same thing myself—invest it in securities that'll give me big returns."

"D'ye mean to tell me," demanded Job, "a bank takes the money that folks deposits an' puts it into gold mines an' sech-like?"

"Why, of course. How did you think the bank made the money that it gives you for interest? Never stopped to think of that, did you? Most people don't. But the fact is, the bank invests your money in things you don't know about, and makes money for itself that way. It pays you a few cents interest on the dollar, of course, but it don't pay you all the cents that dollar makes; not by a long shot! The bank keeps the rest. Well, you can easily see that if you did that investing yourself, instead of letting the bank do it, you'd have a lot more money. But there, I'm talking too much."

He moved as if to rise and end the conversation; glanced at his cigar, and remained seated for a few more puffs. The family looked thoughtfully at one another. The only sound was the measured ticking of a clock.

"But people lose their money sometimes investin' into things," reminded Mercy. "And they're pretty safe when they put it into a bank."

"Oh, yes," agreed the financier, in a tolerant tone. "But the banks make mistakes, too. Sometimes they fail, and then you lose everything. And if I have to lose my money I want to have something to say about how it's lost, not let a bank lose it without asking me. But I've never lost anything yet, or let any of my friends pick a bad risk. I only handle things that I know are good. Well, I guess I'd better go to bed, folks. Let's see, is there a lamp in my room?"

"I'll light it," offered Mercy.

She passed into the guest-room. Aiken arose slowly and stood lingering over the final whiff from the brown butt; then stepped over and dropped it into the stove. The other two, mother and son, sat with brows furrowed.

"I've said, more'n once, banks ain't as safe as they'd ought to be," asserted the mother. "I've hearn o' times when they done somethin' wrong an' the folks that had their money into 'em couldn't never git it out. An' I've told ye, Job, ye better keep yer eye on to—"

"Hush up!" rumbled Job. "There ain't no use into sayin' it all over ag'in. I guess we ain't got nothin' to worry about."

"Oh, don't let what I've said bother you," quickly counseled Aiken. "I'd better not have told you so much—a bank man like me. My tongue just got away from me, sitting here with such good folks. I ought to have kept those things to myself. Well, good night, all!"

He moved doorward, followed by Job's observant gaze. Mercy, coming out, nodded to him in an absent way. As the door closed she looked at her husband and seemed about to speak; but, catching the watchful eye of her mother-in-law, said nothing. Soon afterward the house was dark.

Then, in their own bedroom, the young wife whispered:

"Job, I done somethin' that mebbe I hadn't ought to. When I lit the lamp into

that feller's room I see his switchel was open a little ways, and a piece o' paper was layin' on to the floor beside it. It must of dropped out when he was a-gittin' somethin' else. An' I picked it up an' looked at it."

"Wal, what was it?"

"'Twas a certif'cate of a mine somewheres out West—Nevady or Nebrasky, I ain't sure which. All a kind of a gold color. An'—an' I peeked into the switchel, an' there was a lot more of 'em."

"Hum!" grunted Job.

And for a time he lay silent. At length Mercy added, hesitantly—

"Ye know, Job—"

"Yas, I know, gal. Don't ye worry yer head 'bout nothin' at all."

She went serenely to sleep. He lay for some time gazing at the darkness, mulling over a number of things. At last he, too, slept.

In the morning Aiken was up betimes, bright and cheerful, but still limping. At the breakfast table he asked questions as to his route to Ellenville. Job answered laconically. After the meal they went to the barn, where the city man clambered into his carriage, sat back, and braced his feet as if holding back a restive horse.

HIS mouth set and his forehead wrinkled.

"——it!" he grumbled. "That's funny, I can walk without too much pain, but when I put a strain on that leg it hurts like the ——. I ought to be traveling, but— What do you think, friend? Would you drive to Ellenville with a leg like that?"

"Not 'less'n 'twas powerful important an' I was sure o' my hoss."

Aiken stared abstractedly out at the road; gave his leg another trial, and swore again, softly. After a minute of thought he said:

"Well, it don't make much difference to me; I'm taking this trip mostly as a favor to one of my banks and to old Whitaker—the man that wants to see me. Only for the fact that he's an old investor with us, and I thought I'd like the drive across country I wouldn't be going to him at all. And I don't feel like taking that ride now that I'm lamed up, so— Would I be inconveniencing you if I stayed here another day, Mr. Briggs?"

"Oh, no. Stay an' welcome. It'll be good for the hoss, too; give his mouth a rest."

"That's right. Well, that's what we'll do, then. And thanks very kindly, my friend, for your hospitality."

"Awright."

The hill man turned to the stall and went to grooming the horse. The owner watched him, observing that both man and animal seemed to enjoy their companionship.

"You two get along fine, don't you?" he remarked. "I should think you'd have a horse of your own. You seem to like them."

"I do, an' I did have one, but jest lately he up an' died on to me. I ain't seen 'nother one that I liked."

"Oh, I see. How d'you like this one?"

"So-so," non-committally.

Conversation lapsed. Aiken moved to the door and contemplated the craggy, lonely country rising round about. After awhile he exclaimed:

"Gee, this must be lonesome in winter! I should think you'd want to live in a livelier place. And your wife, too—I'll bet she'd like to be where she could see more people, and go to a theater sometimes, and so on."

"Uh-huh. I noticed ye was talkin' a hull lot about city things to the womenfolks."

Aiken shot a quick look at him. Job met his eye and held it, his own gaze somewhat sardonic. A half-surprized, half-puzzled expression crept over the traveler's face, and he made no answer. Lighting another cigar, he smoked a few minutes; then, saying that he guessed he'd use more liniment on his leg, drifted back into the house. When he was gone Job looked quizzically at the horse. The horse snorted.

At his own good time the hill man lounged back into his kitchen, finding his guest entertaining the women with reminiscences from his own early life. He had, it seemed, been a very poor boy, compelled to work at any available job and abused by stingy employers; but eventually, through extreme industry and frugality, he had managed to accumulate his first hundred dollars. This, on the advice of a man who had taken a fancy to him, he had invested in—a horse-race.

Yes, a horse-race, at very long odds. He described the race in detail, jocosely picturing his torments of anxiety while it was being run. The horse had won, and his

hundred had thus become several thousands. But he never had gambled on races since then; it was too risky, and he knew enough to let well enough alone. Instead, he had bought and sold stocks, handled real estate, and built up a solid and very handsome business. The thinly veiled moral of his tale, however, was that his rise in life had been due to the fact that he dared to take a chance.

The story was well told, and all listened attentively, Job taking keen interest in the horse-race. When the narrator ceased a silence ensued. Bluntly Mrs. Briggs broke it.

"An' what ye sellin' jest now, Mr. Aiken?"

"Selling? Why, ma'am, I wouldn't say I was selling anything, especially now that I can't get over to Ellenville today. I was just taking some gilt-edge securities over to a fellow that's anxious to get them. He was to leave Ellenville today, though, so now he'll have to come to the bank and get them himself. He'll come, all right. That stuff's going up fast, and by Christmas he'll double his money."

"Land sakes! Double his money into two months?"

"Easy. It's one of the fastest things I've seen in years. And the longer it's kept the better it'll be. By next summer it ought to be worth ten times its present value. I've bought a lot of it myself, and I'd take a lot more if I could handle it; but the rest of my money's tied up just now in a big real estate deal." He frowned regretfully, then shrugged. "Oh, well, there's no use in being a hog. I've got all that's good for me. Might as well let the other fellows have some too."

"Ye mean," persisted Mrs. Briggs, "that if anybody bought—uh—ten dollars' wuth now he'd git twenty dollars for it come Christmas?"

Aiken laughed quietly.

"That's it. Excuse my laughing, but it can't be bought in ten-dollar lots. But that's the idea. An investment of, say, five thousand now means a return of ten thousand at least. It's one of those things I was telling you about last night, that people get rich on. Why, three months ago there was half a million dollars' worth of it issued, and now there's only about fifty thousand dollars' worth left. The wise fellows have been buying it, you see. I don't believe there'll be any of it in sight two weeks from now."

Job, filling his pipe, spoke shrewdly.

"If it's as good as all o' that, mister, why don't that bank o' yourn hang on to it?"

"Well, that's a long story, and a bank secret besides. But the short of it is that the bank needs some cash for use in regular channels; and it wants to keep on the right side of old man Whitaker, too. There' some politics mixed up in it that I can't go into."

"Uh-huh. So there can't nobody buy this thing but this ol' man Whitaker."

"M-m-m, well, no, I wouldn't say that. Anybody's money is good, of course, as long as it's cash. Whitaker would be hopping mad if I let anybody else have it, but still—if a man should come along right now with from five to thirty thousand I don't think I'd refuse to sell."

HIS gaze rested steadily on his host, who scratched a match, got his pipe to glowing, and then stood looking absently through a window, his face unreadable. Old Mrs. Briggs also looked at her son, her lips opening and closing several times without words. Mercy, busy with preparations to bake a batch of biscuits, paused to glance at all three.

"Wal," drawled the hill man at length, "that sounds like an awful good investment, mister; a reg'lar gold-mine, ye might say."

"That's exactly what it is, friend. A new mine, out West, that's going to be one of the biggest producers in history. There's no question about it; they've found the gold, had it tested, and made sure it was high grade, with a great big vein that will last for years. But it runs through some mighty hard rock, and the company finds it's got to buy a lot of new machinery—expensive stuff—to work it right. They've got millions there in the ground, but they're a little short of ready money for immediate expenses; so they've had to issue these shares to cover their needs. By the way, did you ever see anything of that kind—mine shares, I mean? I don't mind showing you one. Just a minute."

He proceeded briskly to his room, to return at once with an ornately impressive certificate. Job took it gingerly, holding it as if awed by the feel of so valuable a document. His eyes traveled slowly over the sheet, absorbing every word. Aiken carelessly lighted a fresh cigar.

"Gorry, that looks like money, don't it?" the countryman admired, passing it back as if loath to let it go. "How—how much do ye figger it's wuth right now?"

"Well, I don't just know. It was worth fifty dollars yesterday morning, and it must have gone up some since then. But still, if I was to sell any of this I'd let it go at fifty a share."

"Um! An' would ye sell, say, a couple o' shares?"

"What? Ho, ho! Hardly! Nothing less than a hundred shares, friend. Even a hundred would be a pretty small deal; but I might do it for a friend—and for ready cash."

"Huh! Wal, I couldn't dig up no sech money as that, right outen my pockit."

Aiken laughed again in his good-natured way.

"Oh, I guess you could raise that much in a few hours if you wanted to, Mr. Briggs. But I'm not trying to sell it to you, you know. I really hadn't ought to sell it to anybody, with Whitaker waiting for it."

Job stared again through the window. After a time his gaze strayed to Mercy, who now stood watching him tensely. His off eyelid drooped a tiny bit. With a sudden smile she turned back to her work.

"Wal, I guess I'll go take a walk," he said. "Be back bimeby." He moved doorward.

"If you'd rather drive you can use my horse," smoothly suggested Aiken.

"N-n-o-o, I guess not. I ain't goin' very fur jest now."

He went out. Aiken looked after him speculatively; then, observing through the window the other's thoughtful mien, devoted himself contentedly to his smoke.

With the aimless pace of one debating inwardly, the mountaineer passed from sight, going down the road. Soon thereafter his step became purposeful and rapid. With long strides he descended the hill, turned in at a narrow path, and, by this shortcut, tramped to the junction of the two roads of the Traps. There stood the weather-beaten house of a weather-beaten hill man, one Thaddeus Hooten. Between Job and Thaddeus ensued converse. Thereafter the latter hitched up a horse and drove rapidly away toward the town of High Falls, at the north. Job ambled back home.

From that time until after supper the hill man was almost as taciturn as the black horse. To Aiken, and to his mother as well, he gave the impression of thinking deep and long regarding the providential chance for profitable investment. The visitor tactfully refrained from overmuch talk. Mrs. Briggs observed no such delicacy, but her questions and remarks evoked scant response from her son. Mercy, engaged in small household tasks, said almost nothing. Each waited, patiently or otherwise, for enlightenment on the thoughts and intentions of the master of the house. That master himself awaited light from another quarter.

It was just before supper time when Thaddeus Hooten, on foot, came rambling artlessly in. He looked curiously at Aiken, talked a few minutes about nothing in particular to the family, and loafed out again. Job idly wandered after him. Once they were out of ear-shot, Thad began talking more rapidly and pointedly. When he had said his say, his fellow cogitated briefly, then responded with a few succinct sentences which caused him to return home snickering. Job, too, seemed amused as he betook himself to the barn; and there, he walked into the stall of the black, stood a minute or two patting the glossy shoulder, and muttered:

"Come mornin', ol' boy, mebbe I'll tell ye a funny story 'bout a feller that the both of us knows."

When he reentered his house, however, he gave no indication of knowing any funny stories. In fact, he remained serious and silent until supper was over. Then he remarked:

"I been a-thinkin' a hull lot, mister, 'bout that 'ere gold-mine investment o' yourn. It looks awful good, the way ye tell it, but still, it's a kind of a gamble, ain't it?"

"I wouldn't call it so," quickly retorted Aiken, "or I wouldn't have invested my own money in it. I'd call it a sure thing."

"Uh-huh. But still an' all, there's a kind of a gamble into all o' them things, ain't there? A feller might lose."

"Oh well, if you put it that way, everything we do is a gamble. It's a gamble to put money in a bank, or to buy a house, or to get married, or do anything at all." His little laugh sounded. "But we all keep gambling on those things, I notice."

"Yup. That's so. Wal, I dunno. I'm kind o' wonderin' how good my luck is jest now. I'm a-goin' to try it tonight with

some cards an' see how it runs, 'fore I decide on to anything. Ever play cards, mister?"

"Why—er—not often. What do you play?"

"Oh, a little poker, oncet into a while. Thad Hooten, now, he likes to play at it when we can git another feller or so to set in. He said he'd come back after supper, an' we'll play an hour or so, if ye want to."

A pause. Aiken felt for his ever-present cigar and chewed its tip as if debating his answer. Before he decided on it the latch clicked. Thad Hooten came in and grinned diffidently around.

"'Lo, Thad," saluted Job. "Pull up a chair. Mr. Aiken dunno as he wants to play, but—"

"Oh, all right, of course," surrendered the city man, becoming jovial once more. "But don't skin me too badly, boys. Remember I'm a poor old cripple."

CHUCKLES greeted his humor. Thad eased his lanky figure into a chair and produced a villainous pipe. Job brought cards, a set of soiled paper chips, and tobacco. Aiken pulled up his cuffs and called on the world to witness that he had nothing up his sleeves except a pair of arms. Mercy took a lamp and vanished into the cellar, whence she reappeared with a large pitcher of cider; set it where her man could reach it, brought glasses, and then withdrew for the night. Her mother-in-law, looking somewhat disgruntled over this turn of events, also wended her way bedward.

With a preliminary libation from the pitcher, the game got under way. For the first few hands each played warily, guest and host feeling each other out. Thad, from the outset, proved a weak and timid player, and it soon became evident that any real contest must lie between the other two. Job was, as ever, slow in decisions. Aiken, despite his professed inexperience, betrayed considerable familiarity with the game by his ability to think up jokes while playing. Moreover, as the heady cider began to work, his motions quickened.

Now, as a warning to any misguided outsider who may hereafter think to amuse himself at the expense of Shawangunk mountaineers, let it be stated that those untutored uplanders know poker. Some of them, in fact, know it so well that they habitually play it with kings and deuces wild; and the patronizing visitor who expects to outsmart them may consider himself lucky if the end of the game finds him still in possession of his shirt. Neither Job nor Thad was by any means the best player in the Traps; Job was a trifle too slow, Thad a shade too cautious. Yet Aiken would have been astonished if he could have known how much of Thad's present timidity was assumed, and downright astounded if the lanky dummy had revealed his real ability. And had he glimpsed the guile lurking under the thick thatch of Job, he would have thrown down his cards and departed while the departing was good.

But no man could have read the mind of the wooden-faced Briggs at that stage. And the vision of Aiken, normally keen though it might have been, was blunted just then by the main purpose of the game—to reveal to Job the status of his luck as a preliminary to investment.

So, as time went on, it came about that Job's cards improved, particularly when the deal fell to Aiken. With this good omen, and with occasional glasses of the mellowing cider, came a mounting good humor and a growing recklessness on the part of the hill man.

"AW, SAY, this 'ere penny ante's gittin' kind o' slow," he blurted. "Le's play a jack-pot for somethin' wuth while. Then I'll know if I'm lucky on to a big proposition, or only on to little 'uns."

"What do you call worth while?" countered Aiken.

"Wal—uh—le's see. I wouldn't ask ye to gamble none o' them mine shares, seein' they ain't really yourn but the bank's. But—wal, I like that hoss an' buggy o' yourn. I'll play ye for that, mister, ag'inst—say—two hundred dollars o' my money. How's that?"

"Hm!" The visitor reached for the pitcher and slowly, very slowly, poured a drink, his eyes narrow with calculation. The draft drained the last of the cider.

"Well, I don't just like to do that, the way your luck's running," he went on. "If I lose, how do I travel out of here? I have to go in the morning."

"Oh, I'll see that ye git out, don't ye worry." Job grinned as if the question amused him.

Thad, too, smiled slightly.

"And if I win, where's the money coming from? And how about this fellow's bet, too?"

"The money'll come if ye win it, mister! I don't bet nothin' that I can't pay. An' about Thad, he'll ante the same—"

"Oh, my gorry!" gasped Thad. "I can't set into no sech hand as that—it's too steep for me—"

"Yas, ye will!" bullied Job. "I'll stand good for ye if ye lose. Now what d'ye want to do, mister? This'll be the last gamble we'll make. Ye won a lot o' money on to a hoss one time, 'cordin' to what ye said this mornin'. Be ye 'fraid to try it ag'in?"

The other flushed. Mechanically he drank his cider.

"After that's settled," added Job, "I want to talk to ye 'bout that mine thing."

Aiken drummed on his glass; looked at the clock, and achieved a yawn.

"Oh, all right," he acquiesced. "I don't like to take your money away from you, but if you insist on trying for my horse it's your funeral."

"I guess I can stand it. Gorry, I'm dry! Wait a minute while I fill 'er up again."

He lighted another lamp and carried the pitcher down-stairs. Aiken slid a side glance at the drab Thad; then, with a confidential air, asked—

"Just between you and me, old man, can he pay up if he loses?"

"——, yas, mister," snorted Thad. "I guess prob'ly he's better fixed 'n anybody else round here. 'Bout three-four year ago, now, him an' his wife got left eight thousan' dollars. An' this here farm come to 'em the same way. Into a will, the hull thing was, that ol' John Snow left when he up an' died. John, he hadn't no kith or kin, an' he took a likin' to Job an' Mercy, but he never let on what he was a-goin' to do till he died an' done it. Folks talks about it yit. An' Job's made more money a-sellin' land to that big hotel company that come into here last year. Takin' it all round, I reckon he's wuth twenty thousand."

"Oh! Is that so!"

"Yassir, that's so."

Thad's steady gaze rested on the questioner's face. Aiken shifted his own regard, letting his eyes rove until they stopped on a window facing the road. Its curtain was drawn only half-way down, and between it and the sill showed blank panes framing empty night. After Aiken had looked absently at them a minute or two his lids drew into a sudden squint.

"What's matter?" drawled Thad.

"Why—I thought I saw something out there; something like a face."

Thad soberly studied the panes.

"I don't see nothin'. Guess ye're a-dreamin', ain't ye?"

"Maybe. I don't see it now."

The clump of Job's feet ascending the stairs recalled their attention to actualities. As he reentered the room Aiken began shuffling the cards. Thad's gaze glued itself to the moving fingers, remaining fixed until the deck was laid down. Job meanwhile replenished the glasses.

"Wal, here's where friendship stops, as the feller says," he announced, squaring himself at the table. "This here's the deal that means bad luck for somebody. An' jest to make it more interestin', every chip's wuth a dollar now. Let 'er go, mister!"

AIKEN flipped out the cards while Job and Thad emptied their glasses. Then all three settled down, with expressions of grim resolution, to the big test of luck.

Thad opened with jacks, and, after the draw, exhibited unexpected spunk. Apparently the size of the stake had nerved him, for he came back on the raises in a way that made Job, who had stood pat, study him cornerwise. Aiken bucked the game with every evidence of determination to win. When his rather meager stock of chips was exhausted he produced a roll of bills, which he played at the stipulated rate of a dollar a chip. This maneuver virtually froze out Thad, forcing him to call for show-down.

"Well, you're lucky, man, you're lucky!" grumbled Aiken, surveying Job's four queens. "Here I've got a straight that ought to have scalped you bald-headed. And look at this man with a full house! Luck? A fellow with your luck, Briggs, just can't lose, no matter what kind of a game he buys into. Well, good-by, little horse."

He waved a hand regretfully in the general direction of the barn. Job, laughing joyously, swept the mingled chips and bills toward him.

"Ye done the dealin' yer own self, mister,"

he reminded. "So ye can't say us fellers hornswoggled ye nowheres, can ye?"

"Oh, the ——, no! I'm not kicking."

"Glad o' that. Now them chips ye played was a dollar apiece, ye know."

Aiken nodded and paid. The victor pocketed the bills, then leaned back in his chair and stretched both arms high over his head. At once Thad's gaze centered on the door.

"Now about them minin' shares—" began Job.

In the midst of his sentence the latch clicked sharply. The door jumped open. In from the night strode two men.

"—Here's a couple o' fellers that wants to talk to ye 'bout the very same thing," continued the host. "Evenin', Mr. Pitman. Sorry to keep ye a-standin' out there into the dark, but I wanted to play my little game out. This the feller ye wanted to see?"

Aiken, suddenly pale, had started half out of his chair; and now, rigid, he leaned on the table, eying the pair who stood grimly over him. One, tall, lantern-jawed, and gray-haired, glared at him as if meditating mayhem. The other, somewhat younger, shorter, and stouter, stood watchful and ready, but with an air more impersonal.

"Yes, this is the feller!" flared the elder. "Aiken, you —— swindler, I'm goin' to put you behind the bars for a good long stretch! But first you're goin' to cough up my money and take back your rotten mine stock, or I'll hammer you to a sausage! Shut up! Don't you open your lyin' mouth or I'll smash your jaw, you—"

"Keep cool, Mr. Pitman," interposed his companion. "No violence. This thing's in my hands now. You identify this man and accuse him of fraud?"

Pitman set his teeth and controlled himself. In a tone of restraint he replied:

"Yes, I do, Sheriff. He's the liar that—"

"All right. Aiken, keep your hands right where they are. That's right. Now sit down and take it easy." He dropped into an overcoat pocket a revolver taken from Aiken's hip. "Got anything to say? Remember it might be used against you."

The self-styled bank director had nothing to say. Glum, he sank back into the chair, his hands still on the table. Pitman, with fists shut, took several steps away from him as if to lessen the temptation to assault. The sheriff remained where he was, close to the prisoner's shoulder.

"Wal, I've got somethin' to say if he ain't," remarked Job, still sitting easily. "I promised to talk to him 'bout that mine, an' I aim to keep my promises. An' speakin' o' promises, mister, I promised ye I'd see that ye got out o' here, didn't I? An' ye'll be gittin' out pretty soon, a-ridin' into a wagon that these fellers brought clear from High Falls for ye. Don't never say I didn't do my best by ye.

"An' now 'bout that gold stock o' yourn. Mister, there's been gold stock into this fam'ly before, or leastways into my wife's. Her father, he got skinned outen all o' his money a-buyin' that stuff, an' he never did git over it. It broke him all up, an' he died awful pore, an' my wife had to come to the Traps to live 'long of an uncle o' hern, an' that's how we got acquainted. So ye see she knows what them things looks like, an' she's kind o' skittish of 'em. An' that idee o' droppin' one of 'em kind o' careless like where she could see it an' leavin' yer switchel open—wal, mister, that didn't work jest like ye mebbe thought it would.

"An' then ag'in, I've been round a mite more'n some fellers. There was a war with Spain a few year back, ye remember. An' I went down to Cuby with the Army. An' when I come back I stayed round Noo York City a few days, an' some slickers tried to sell me di'monds an' gold bricks an' make me guess which shell a little pea was under, an' sech-like. But a feller that I was chummy with, he kep' me clear o' them things, an' he told me 'bout a lot o' them swindles an' how they was worked. An' he told me, too, 'bout critters called 'con men,' that sells green goods an' no-good gold-mines an' sech trash to easy marks."

He paused. Aiken gave him a hard look, but held his tongue.

"I want to be fair to this feller," Job resumed, looking at the sheriff. "He ain't exackly ast me to buy nothin'. He jest—"

"No," broke in Pitman. "He didn't exactly ask me to buy, either. He makes you sell it to yourself. That's how he hooked me. He's a smooth—"

"SHERIFF, you heard that!" thrust the prisoner. "Pitman admits that I never asked him to buy anything. Make a note of that."

"Why, you—" Pitman started forward. The sheriff motioned him back.

"That'll all come out at the proper time

and place," declared the officer. "Let's hear the rest of young Briggs' speech. It's kind of interestin'."

"Ho, ho, I ain't makin' no speech," laughed Job. "I'm jest talkin' gold-mines to Mr. Aiken, like I promised. Wal, mister, ye see, for them two reasons I was jest a-mentionin', I'd be awful slow 'bout buyin' any gold-mines. But there was 'nother thing, too, that made me kind o' mistrust ye right off at the start. An' that thing was jest hoss-sense.

"Now here's where the hoss-sense comes in, mister. Fust, pretty soon after I ketched that hoss o' yourn, I see he warn't a bad hoss; he was an awful good hoss, gentle an' kind; an' 'twarn't hoss-sense for him to run away 'less'n he was made to. An' when I onharnessed him I found out he'd been made to. An' jest to make double sure I went down the road an' studied on to what happened there. An' I see that he never shied or nothin', like he would if he'd got scairt sudden, and ye never got throwed out like ye said. I see that ye'd set yer switchel down 'side the road, an' then ye deviled him, a-yankin' on to his mouth till he was nigh crazy; an' then ye give him a cruel kick into the belly an' let him go.

"Course, he run. You'd run if I done the same thing to you. But ye knowed this was an awful long hill—anybody can see that 'fore he comes to it—an' ye knowed 'twould take the tuck outen him 'fore he got to the top of it, an' so 'twould be pretty easy for somebody to go after him an' fetch him back to ye. An' then ye jest throwed a little dirt on to yerself an' come a-limpin' along to the house to git some help an' so on.

"Wal, 'twas only hoss-sense for me to figger ye had some cute reason for doin' a funny thing like that. An' the only reason I could figger was, ye wanted to come accidental-like to my house an' have an excuse to stay awhile. An' I was sure o' that as soon as ye limped on to the wrong leg. Yas, ye did, mister. When ye come in ye limped on to the right one, but when ye went to bed ye forgot an' limped on to the left. An' today, by gorry, when ye went to git that gold paper o' yourn, ye forgot to limp at all! An' then ag'in, ye never used none o' that liniment we give ye. I know because I'd of smelt it if ye had; it's powerful strong. An' besides that, I know jest exackly how much was into the bottle, an' it ain't lowered by a hair. If ye'd used some of it, an' if ye'd had a little rock or somethin' into yer shoe to make ye limp on to the same leg all o' the time, ye'd of had me guessin' a lot more'n ye did."

He grinned, and so did the sheriff. The latter was keenly enjoying this tale of deduction and detection.

"But ye worked it pretty cute, mister, for all o' that. Ye're a pretty good play-actor, an' the way ye keep edgin' folks along an' yit makin' out that ye don't want to sell nothin'—wal, as Mr. Pitman says, ye can jest about make a feller beg ye to take his money away. But still an' all, it didn't seem to be jest hoss-sense that an important feller like you would be drivin' cross-country to carry somethin' to an ol' codger into Ellenville, or that yer bank'd let go of somethin' so almighty vallyble as ye said that stuff was.

"An' 'tween one thing an' another I got real curious to know if ye was tellin' the truth 'bout where ye come from. I knowed if ye come into here from P'kipsy, like ye said, ye must of come by the Paltz road an' the Gap; but if ye didn't ye'd come from High Falls way. An' seein' as them two roads jines together down by Thad Hooten's place, I went down an' ast Thad if he knowed which way ye come. An' Thad's little gal, she'd seen ye comin' from High Falls way. So that made ye out a liar, Mr. Aiken.

" 'Wal,' says I, 'Thad, jest you drive up to High Falls an' see Jim Tompkins, that runs the hotel, an' Rob Harper, that keeps the gin'ral store. Jim, he knows everybody that comes an' goes, an' Rob knows a lot 'bout Albany an' somethin' 'bout investments. Jest ask 'em some questions.' So Thad, he put out for High Falls. An' when he come back, mister, an' we talked so careless like out here into the road, he says ye're a slicker an' yer mine's a fake an' ye ain't got no place into Alb'ny. An' more'n that, while ye was into High Falls ye stuck Mr. Pitman here for twenty-five hundred, an' Mr. Pitman wrote to a stock-dealin' feller an' found out yer mine ain't no good, an' he's a-comin' after ye as quick's he can git the sheriff. An' Jim Tompkins, he sends word like this:

" 'Job, that Aiken feller got me talkin' while he was here, an' I told him 'bout how ol' John Snow left ye all o' his money; an' if he's to yore place now he's after that money. Look out for him—he's a slick 'un.' So

after all o' this, mister, 'twas jest hoss-sense for me not to buy none o' yer gold bricks."

Pitman cackled sharply. Thad and the sheriff chuckled.

"An' ye'll remember, mister, I never once told ye I was a-goin' to buy yer stuff," concluded Job. "If ye thought I was, why, ye was mistook. This here little game, now, was jest to see how good my luck was. An' ye said, yer own self, ye warn't a-kickin' over the way it turned out. Ain't that so?"

A short silence. Then Aiken sneered:

"Have it your own way. Maybe I could say something different about that game—something about marked cards and whipsawing—but seeing the sheriff's on your side, what's the use?"

He stepped back from the table as he spoke, turning toward his room. Two pairs of eyes lighted up hotly: Job's and the sheriff's. The latter was the quicker on the retort.

"What d'you mean? I'm on nobody's side but the law's. If you've got anything to say spit it out."

"Yas!" seconded Job menacingly. "Talk turkey!"

"Oh, never mind." Aiken kept on sauntering doorward. "I guess you need the money, Briggs. You worked hard enough for it."

With an irritating laugh, he walked into his room. The sheriff looked frostily at Job and Thad; then, a trifle tardy, moved after Aiken, demanding—

"Here, where d'you think you're going?"

"Oh, just getting my coat and grip," came the easy reply.

But on its heels sounded quick movement and a scraping noise.

THEN four men jumped. The sheriff, Pitman, and Thad sprang simultaneously for the doorway through which Aiken had so casually gone. Job leaped instead for the outer door; yanked it open, and plunged out into the semi-gloom of the moonless but starlit night.

A second later three of these four were sprawling and scrambling in a wrathful heap; the sheriff tripped by an unseen obstruction on the dark floor, Thad and Pitman falling over him. Aiken was gone through a swiftly opened window. But outside, as the overthrown trio struggled up, sounded grunts and blows, then a gasping groan.

"Hey—let up—I'll be good!"

"Ye'd better!" came Job's grim tones.

And as three heads protruded from the window, their owners made out a supine swindler surmounted by a stalwart hillman.

"Come an' git him if ye want him, sheriff," grinned the captor. "Pretty nigh slipped ye, didn't he? But the ol' hoss-sense is still a-workin'. When that winder slid up 'twas jest hoss-sense to figger he was makin' an escape, an' more hoss-sense to go look for him where he was, 'stead o' where he'd gone from."

Pitman guffawed in relief. Thad snickered. The sheriff muttered something. They climbed out, and the officer snapped handcuffs on the half-dazed target of Job's brawny fists.

"Guess that'll hold you for awhile, Aiken," he growled. "Now git up and travel. Gee, you messed up his face for fair, Briggs!"

"I was owin' him a few cracks for what he said about cheatin', mister. O' course he was doin' it jest to git a minute's leeway, but still an' all, it didn't set jest right with me. Got any more o' them kind o' remarks left in ye, Aiken? If ye have—"

He paused suggestively. The crestfallen captive, mopping his streaming nose on a sleeve, said nothing at all.

"No, I don't think we'll hear any more out of him," Pitman dryly observed. "So let's pick up that grip that he left there for us to fall over, sheriff, and take him down to where he won't trip up anybody else for a good while."

"Right. Get it, will you? And his clothes. You, Briggs, harness up his horse."

"Hoss? He ain't got no hoss, mister. The hoss an' buggy both b'longs to me."

The sheriff peered at him, perceived his slight grin, heard Thad chuckle, and saw light.

"Oh. That's the way of it, huh? Thought that game of yours was just for table stakes. Well, I guess your title to that horse may not stand good in law. And Mr. Pitman will likely want to attach it—"

"Law, hey?" Job's tone hardened again. "Lookit here, mister. I don't want no trouble with the law. But possession is nine p'ints o' the law, an' I'm into possession o' that hoss an' I aim to stay so. An'

till somebody can prove he's got a better claim than me, the man that tries takin' him away from me is a-goin' to bump into a thrashin'-machine!"

The sheriff grunted. Then up spoke Thad Hooten.

"I'm a witness, mister, that Job got that hoss fair an' square. I was here durin' the hull transaction, a-watchin' close. Fact is, that's jest what I'm here for."

At that the officer snorted, and Pitman showed his teeth in a wintry smile.

"Better let the horse rest," suggested the latter. "Young Briggs seems to have the best claim to him just now, and we owe him somethin' for catchin' this eel."

The sheriff gestured as if casting aside this comparatively unimportant issue and turned again to Aiken.

"You can get goin'," he said. "And don't try any more breaks!"

The prisoner shuffled away through the grass, his guard close behind. Pitman reentered the window, to emerge again with Aiken's belongings. He and the Trapsmen followed the departing pair to the road. There Job stopped.

" 'Night, Mr. Aiken," he called. "Any time ye want some more Shawangunk poker come an' see us, an' me an' Thad'll oblige ye."

"Go to ——!" snarled the financier.

And his footsteps—no longer limping—receded into the night. The others, saying nothing, swung away after him, heading for the distant Hooten house, where Pitman's team had been left in accordance with prearranged plan.

JOB laughed again. Then he went back into the house, picked up the lamp, and walked out through the shed-room to the barn. The horse, lying down, lifted his intelligent head and looked inquiringly at his new master. The hill man peered toward the big outer door, making sure that it was locked for the night; then stood returning the trustful gaze of the contented animal.

"Hoss-sense!" he said softly. "Beats all, don't it, how slick some fellers can be an' yit stub their toe on to a little plain hoss-sense? An' when a feller like that has got a hoss like you, why, it's jest hoss-sense for another feller to kind of outslick him an' keep ye, ain't it? That's how I figger it. Wal, sleep tight, an' tomorrer I'll tell ye that funny story that I promised ye. 'Night, ol' boy!"

DEADWOOD DICK

***by* Raymond W. Thorp**

OH, YES, "Deadwood Dick" was a real person, not just a creature formed by the imagination of the author of the famous "Deadwood Dick" series of nickel novels, as many people suppose. His real name was Richard Bullock, and he actually went under the euphonious title above, and many of the hairbreadth escapes and adventures ascribed to him by this same author were his by right. In fact, it was Bullock's many genuine adventures in the 'Seventies that formed the basis for many a hair-raising tale in the cheap novels of days gone by. He was the driver of the famous Deadwood Coach—yes, the same one Buffalo Bill resurrected and used in his show for many years—which bore shipments of gold from the Homestake and other South Dakota mines to Omaha, Nebraska, and he achieved such a reputation for bravery and for sureness of aim with six-shooter and rifle that the outlaws permitted the coach to pass when "Deadwood Dick" was driving.

Bullock outlived many other famous Western characters of his time, dying on the night of Ferbruary 7, 1919, in a hospital at Glendale, near Los Angeles, California. "Deadwood Dick" was seventy-five years old at the time of his death.

The CAMP-FIRE

A free-to-all meeting place for readers, writers and adventurers

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

IT IS indeed belated recognition for Commander David McDougal, U. S. N., for services sixty-three years ago, but I think Camp-Fire will not add to the delay:

Camp Lewis, Washington.

In your issue for December 30th is a communication from Mr. William A. Bowie relative to the action of the *U. S. S. Wyoming* at the straits of Shimonoseki, Japan. Mr. Bowie's facts are in the main correct. However, being fortunate enough to possess a very good account of the affair, and thinking that some of my fellow readers might be interested, I am sending you the following:

IN 1863 the depredations of the Confederate ship *Alabama* had caused the sending of ships of war of the Union to all the Seven Seas in an effort to capture or destroy this menace to the supply of the Federal armies in the field. Among the ships so sent was the *U. S. S. Wyoming*, a screw sloop, of new construction, and mounting as her main battery at least four 11-inch Dahlgren guns. She was commanded by Commander David McDougal, U. S. N., an officer of high professional attainments. She was sent to the Pacific to search for the *Alabama*, but, failing to find the commerce destroyer, arrived off the coast of Japan early in the summer of 1863.

Upon word of his arrival being received by the American Minister in Yokohama, McDougal was notified by the latter that the presence of the *Wyoming* was necessary at that place for the protection of American interests. He proceeded to Yokohama and gave refuge to many Americans until such time as they could be safely lodged ashore. Japan was on the verge of civil war. The Mikado had been practically relegated to obscurity by the Shogun—also known as the Tycoon—or Prime Minister of Japan. A certain element of the population, including many powerful clans, opposed the entry of the

whites to Japan. Inasmuch as the treaty with America had been signed by the Tycoon, a decade before, the rebellious elements of the Japanese planned to oust this official and reestablish the Mikado as the rightful ruler of the country.

AS PART of the acts to exclude all foreigners, a certain clan known as the Choshiu had taken three ships, all bought from America, had armed them, and had also fortified the straits of Shimonoseki. The three ships were the steamer *Lancefield*, the bark *Daniel Webster* and the brig *Lanrick*. On the 11th of July, McDougal received word that an American ship, the *Pembroke*, had been fired upon at the entrance of the straits and sunk with all on board. McDougal was under orders to return to America but, realizing the gravity of the situation and acting with customary American initiative, weighed anchor at once for the straits, where he arrived on the evening of the 15th.

At this point the Inland Sea of Japan narrows down to a channel some three miles long and from one-half mile to a mile in width. The shoal water and sunken rocks of the channel make the tide run very swift. On the town side the channel is commanded by high bluffs, at the foot of which is the town. It was here that the *Pembroke* had been fired upon. As a matter of fact she came off with slight injuries, but others were not so fortunate. A French despatch boat was fired upon. The Dutch frigate *Medusa* of 16 guns was hulled 31 times, and lost four killed and five wounded. A day or so later a French gunboat was hit and a Satsuma vessel, whom the Japanese mistook for a foreigner, was sunk in mid-channel.

AT FIVE o'clock on the morning of the 16th, general quarters was sounded and the *Wyoming* got under weigh for the straits. Her entry thereto was signalled by gunfire and as soon as she was within range she became the target for a heavy cannonade from the shore batteries. The Japanese fire was not answered until the *Wyoming* arrived at the narrowest part of the straits. It was upon the narrow part of the channel that the heavier guns of the shore batteries were concentrated. Beyond, in more open water, lay the three armed merchantmen. The bark lay anchored close to the town, the brig about fifty yards farther out and a little beyond, and the steamer still farther beyond and near mid-channel. McDougal had noticed, as he came in, a line of stakes set in mid-channel at the narrows and rightly guessed that these were range marks placed there for the use of the Japanese gunners. (Mr. Bowie believed them to be on the opposite shore.) Rightly guessing their purpose, McDougal steered close inshore toward the town, avoiding them. His foresight probably was the salvation of his ship, as the concentrated fire of the enemy passed through the rigging. Before the enemy guns could be properly laid the *Wyoming* was through the narrows and bearing down at full speed upon the ships at anchor. At this juncture a fresh battery of four guns opened fire upon her, but one shot from the forward pivot gun enfiladed the battery and completely destroyed it.

RUNNING alongside the bark at close quarters, McDougal engaged her with his port broadside. The starboard guns then engaged the brig, the *Wyoming* fighting the two ships at once. The ships were so close that the long guns of the *Wyoming* were almost touching the enemy's muzzles and it was at this part of the fight that the *Wyoming* suffered her losses. The forward gun division suffered the most, due to its exposed position. The Japanese handled their guns with remarkable speed; so well, in fact, that the brig alone managed to get three broadsides into the *Wyoming*. On the latter, by double shotting the guns, great effect was obtained on the hulls of the enemy, so that by the time the *Wyoming* had run free of these two adversaries the brig was beginning to settle, later sinking.

Going ahead, McDougal maneuvered for a fighting position against the steamer but, due to the swiftness of the tides, went aground by the bow. The steamer, taking advantage of his predicament, weighed anchor and stood off to the other side of the channel, evidently preparing to ram. In the meantime, however, McDougal got his ship afloat again by backing the engines and concentrated his fire on the steamer. All this time he was subjected to the combined fire of the shore batteries and the bark. The first two shots took effect on the steamer's hull, the third, from the forward pivot, penetrated her boilers and she sank in a cloud of steam and smoke. The gunner of the forward pivot, whose name has been forgotten, seems to have been an important factor in the action, having disposed of an entire battery of four guns and a ship with two shots.

McDougal now trained his guns on the bark and with a few well-directed rounds converted her into a splintered and sinking hulk. He now turned his attention to the shore batteries, silencing them in turn, finally steaming out again unmolested.

THE action lasted one hour and ten minutes, during which time the *Wyoming* had been hulled ten times, her rigging and smokestack badly cut up, and a casualty list of five killed and seven wounded incurred. The coolness and nerve of the American commander, coupled with the high state of discipline of the crew, a great many of whom had never been under fire before, were responsible for the victory.

The Japanese subsequently closed the straits and kept them closed for fifteen months against all comers. Finally, a large foreign fleet put an end to the insurgents and opened the straits once more, but no action had so impressed the Japanese as that of the *Wyoming*.

The captain of the Dutch frigate *Medusa*, who had accomplished nothing and had got nothing but hard knocks, was knighted upon his return to Holland, while all the members of his crew received decorations. McDougal received nothing, not even contemporary fame. His exploit was lost, due to the fact that the Civil War was at its height. His feat ranks with that of Cushing and surpasses that of Hobson. The two mentioned had the element of surprize, which McDougal's lacked.

I am indebted for the facts contained in the sketchy account given to a volume entitled, "A Short History of the United States Navy," published in 1911 as a text-book for the Midshipmen at the U. S. Naval Academy, of which institution I am a graduate. R. de S. Horn, I might say in passing, who is well known to us, is my classmate. M. C. Cooper, whose book "Grass" is so well known, is another of 1915's lost children. Hoping that Mr. Bowie will not come back at me with a lot of questions, I am, very truly yours,

WILLIAM D. ALEXANDER, Captain, F. A., U. S. A.

When it comes to superstitions and such, well, how long will it take for these things to be civilized out of us? Years ago I heard of a club of Irish gentlemen whose main purpose was to show its members' contempt for superstitions. They met on Fridays, sat thirteen at a table, and all that kind of thing. But it broke up because the members could not cure themselves of greeting every magpie they met with the superstition-prescribed formula, "Hello, Magpie. How's your wife?" or words to that effect.

Most of us have superstitions if we dredge deeply and honestly enough.

Hagerstown, Maryland.

Re "Indian Mourning" by Faunce Rochester in December 30 issue. Mr. R. speaks of the great obstacle to the Indians' advancement being a belief in their medicine doctors.

We must appreciate the fact that the whites were trying to "civilize" a people that were just emerging from savagery. The whites having had centuries of opportunity since the dates used by Mr. R., there has been just that many more years—wonderful years—for the improvement of both races. Yet when I tell your readers, Mr. R. and other writers that right here in the second city in size in this state of Maryland voodooism is firmly believed in by hundreds of educated (high school education) people, I might be questioned as to my veracity if not my sanity.

No, they don't call it voodoo. A child has the "Go Backs," so they take it to a person who has the "power." Another is "Liver Grown," so it is taken to a person who can "measure" it. A third is inflicted with warts, we will say, so it is taken to another who "tries" for them.

Now all of these curists have a certain cantation that is recited when the power, measure or try is being practised. This is not confined to children, but adults who ought to know better and who laugh at the absurdities of the poor Indian or African. And this is America! More, these people who believe this doctrine are not foreigners, in the generally accepted term, but have generations of American ancestors behind them, are good church members, and generally law-abiding citizens.—L. J. SCHAEFER.

HERE is a sample of a type of letter that begins to irk me considerably. People write asking me to print in Camp-Fire their views on some subject or other but ask to have their names omitted in order to avoid consequent trouble, inconvenience or embarrassment to themselves. It doesn't seem to occur to them at all that what they are asking is that I should shoulder these things in their place. Their idea of a fair deal is that they should express the views from under a safe cover and leave me to take the consequences. Even in cases where I most emphatically do not agree with said views.

At the least it means more letters for me to answer and at the worst it means a riot directed in large part against the magazine and me since there is no other visible target. I have views of my own and they get me into a sufficient number of arguments without my acting as goat for people who are afraid to stand up and take what they earn.

Here is the sample case. The writer, whose initials of course are not really M. N. O., doesn't even tell me the name of the physician in question and I'm not going to take the trouble even to pick imaginary initials for said physician.

The attached offering to Camp-Fire I would prefer to be used without my name, in the first place because it isn't my theory although it looks logical, and in the second, because having grown up in a small town where nearly everybody is acquainted, it would make necessary too —— much argument and explanation, both of which I dislike.

At least it is the opposite of the sob stuff usually promulgated by the prohibitory squads.

You probably realize that the cause of our excess lawmaking is the attention given emotional appeals by press, public and legislatures.—M. N. O.

Your appeal in the February 20th issue of *Adventure* for some materialistic arguments against the antidope laws moves me to send you the conclusions of a shrewd old medical practitioner, *viz.:*

Sumptuary prohibition laws are all mistaken. The victims of alcohol, drugs, venery, gambling, etc., betray by their condition the evidence of weakness of will, judgment, mentality or physical make-up. In order to keep the blood-stream of the race clean it is necessary to permit weaklings to perish; otherwise they perpetuate themselves and their weaknesses, usually augmented by those of their mates. You can not gather figs from thistles. No human tribunal can pick the weaklings and segregate or unsex them. They must be allowed to eliminate themselves. Prohibitory laws remove the means.

The normal individual misled by ignorance or curiosity into improper ways of living, reacts and saves himself, proving thereby his fitness to survive.

Man has become intelligent enough to oppose natural law for a time, but never without paying a penalty—in the case in argument by having an unnatural number of deficient individuals.

This is pretty hard-boiled doctrine, but Dame Nature has that characteristic also.

Well, it may "look logical," as M. N. O. says, but if it *is* logical then its own argument wipes the whole medical profession off the earth as a mistaken and blind interference with the laws of nature. Also, if pursued with anything even approaching logic, it wipes off the earth all other effort to relieve suffering, to ameliorate bad conditions of any kind, or to advance civilization.

And who, pray, is going to define these same laws of nature with sufficient authority and definiteness to satisfy all concerned? The doctors? God save us all from harm! They could not possibly even agree among themselves, and it is not so long since one of them, of sufficient prominence in their profession to be selected as one of the speakers at the annual convention of whatever the British national medical association is called, stated very emphatically that the science of medicine—not including surgery—had made no appreciable advance since the days of Moses and that the English people would probably be in better physical condition if they had had no doctors but had followed the old Mosaic Law instead. If he is correct, what can be their qualifications for determining the exact nature and extent of the laws of nature in general? His statement seems to me an extreme one, but then I'm not a doctor and the gentleman who made it is.

It may even be that the doctors are particularly unqualified for the job. At least, quite a few of them have told me that a large part of their profession know a —— of a lot less about the laws of nature in general than they do about the counteractions of various poisons and of chemicals in general as applied to the human body. They can cut up a dead cat, after poisoning it in a variety of ways, but they can't, so help them God, make a cat.

Not that I hold it against any one because he can't make a cat. I can't myself, and don't want to, never having been strong for cats anyhow.

Now, doctors, don't take me too seriously, even as to what I say about not being strong for cats, though everything else I said about cats is literally true and I stick to my guns. I admit my position as to doctors may seem involved, but what I think I am doing is defending the medical profession as a whole from one very, very hard-boiled member of it who, perhaps unconsciously, is arguing for the abolishment of the medical profession as a whole.

If I must be a bit more serious as to my attitude toward doctors I can cover considerable ground by saying that I go to one and have derived exceeding benefit from so doing. On the other hand, think how many doctors I don't go to.

My doctor is one of the—I fear—exceptions in his profession who begin with the laws of nature and strive to follow along the same road with them. He is never tired of exclaiming over the marvelous curative powers of nature—when given opportunity to do their curing. Years ago he laid down the tools of a specialist because he refused longer to operate on results whose causes could have been eliminated by sufficient knowledge of nature's laws. So he ceased to be a specialist and started all over again as a general practitioner. And as a general practitioner he prescribes very sparingly of chemicals for his patients' insides. The most used bottles on his shelves bear the labels "Exercise," "Sleep," "Sane Eating," "Internal and External Cleanness," "Healthy Attitude of Mind."

There are other doctors like that. But not *too* many. Enough to furnish me a strong body-guard against the attacks the less frivolous of my remarks above are likely to bring me. Doctors who agree with that very old people, the Chinese, that the real purpose of a doctor should be, not just to combat the evil effects of ignorant living, but to teach intelligent living so that human beings can avoid harvesting said evil effects—not to cure 'em but to keep 'em well.

As to the hard-boiled doctor and his by no means new theory as to letting nature take its course regardless of whether we know what its course is or what nature and its laws are, I can't take it very seriously. I think perhaps the trouble is that this doctor may have boiled too hard—or not nearly enough, according to the way you look at it. The modern tendency, I should say, is to get boiled too hard and, quite oddly, to be proud of it. I should say, too, that the proper term for this condition as evidenced in most of its numerous victims today is not "hard-boiled" but "half-baked."

There, friends, if you choose to take any of the above solemnly, is plenty of opportunity to attack me for my own opinions—if you feel really sure you know what they are. Go to it. I'm used to it. But if anybody attacks me for the opinions of M. N. O.'s hard-boiled doctor I'm going to start a riot of my own.

One thing more, and this is an entirely solemn and literal statement. When you write me a letter of anywhere from two to eight or ten typewritten pages—even more so when they're in handwriting—in order to argue with me some point about Julius Cæsar, Gila monsters, immigration, Bill

Hickok, Spanish pronunciation or whatever, don't be offended or consider me a quitter if my reply is of far less length. If only one of you wrote me letters like this I'd feel it up to me to reply in full, but there are hundreds of people doing this to me and unless you can arrange for me a day of 240 hours instead of 24 and get me 365 of them each calendar year, it is flatly impossible for me to answer arguments fully by letter. There is the little matter of the magazine to be got out. Maybe I can find as much time for argument as any one of you can find, on the average, but certainly there's no place I can find as much time as all of you together can find.

With these few reservations, gentlemen, have at me.

A WORD from Ernest Haycox in connection with his story in this issue—as to gentlemen rankers then and now:

Brooklyn, New York.

It wasn't at all customary for men of education, such as I have made *Trent*, to be marching in the ranks as nothing more than a sergeant. In those days a well-born man took to the officer's rank quite as naturally as a duck to water, or else he didn't fight. Nor did any one think that strange. It was universally acknowledged that a gentleman had to maintain his honor and dignity by fitting cloth. I was struck by an account of a Revolutionary officer, which I read just the other day, who had been captured and kept prisoner on Long Island for the better part of seven months. When he was exchanged and returned to his own people he found the regiment so altered and his own company so changed that he no longer had a command (he'd been captain). New men were on the roster. So he turned back to civil life regretfully, opining that his martial occupation was gone but that he'd be only too glad to return if there was need of him. Now, it never occurred to him that the country could have used him quite as effectively as a buck private. Nor would it have occurred to any "gentleman." When I think of the many fine men I have seen in France washing greasy pots on kitchen police or digging latrines, I marvel at the change in the fortunes of a "gentleman."

But, and this is the point I want to stress, there were a few men of the planter class who did, for reasons entirely their own, drop into the ranks and forego the perquisites of saber and braid. We find that same kind of man in every generation, stepping beyond the bounds of his own class and doing something not quite accepted by his friends. Of such is *Trent*.—HAYCOX.

IS THE owner of this war-watch among us? Or any one who can locate him? If not, perhaps a letter to the English War Office will give the answer.

While looking through an old sea-bag in which I have kept some souvenirs gathered by me in the late war, I have found a wrist-watch (silver) with the name "V. R. Gordon, No. 11326—1st F. A. Bgde—A. I. F.—Egypt—Feb. 1916" engraved upon the back.

It has occurred to me that possibly this man is alive and would appreciate the return of the watch. I have no way of knowing whether he was killed in the war or not. The watch was given to me by a British "Tommy" in a rest camp at Le Havre, France.

Possibly, if the man was killed, his family (if there is any) would be grateful to have the watch and if it is possible for you to get in touch with a veteran organization who could locate this family I shall be glad to send it to the right party.

I am under the impression that the "A. I. F." may mean Australian Imperial Forces. But on the other hand it may represent African, or even Austrian.—W. A. WASHBURN, 24 Prescott Street, Suite 2, Cambridge, Mass.

THIS isn't an argument. When "The Slave of Marathon" first came to us, Mr. Newsom, who was then on our staff, made some queries as to various points of historical fact involved in the story. These I sent to Mr. Smith. Running across the queries and the reply, the whole seemed rather interesting and indicative of the care taken to be accurate in the use of facts in stories for our magazine. Also it shows the difficulty in always knowing what is the exact fact.

Incidentally, consider just how much reference work Mr. Smith has had to do for this "Gray Maiden" series, the tale of a sword through the ages, with each separate story demanding a painstaking knowledge and understanding of a different period and civilization.

p. 6 The numbers engaged are said to be: Persians 100,000; Athenians 26,000. The "Encyclopedia Britannica" gives the following: Persians 50,000; *hoplites*—Athenian and Platæan—10,000; (light troops 10,000; equaling 20,000. G. B. Grundy, "The Great Persian War," pp. 145-1941, gives yet another set of figures and also gives many excellent reasons for them. Persians, 20,000; *hoplites*—Athenian and Platæans 8,000 light troops 8,000, equalling 16,000. Sir Edward Creasy "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," who bases his statement on the facts as presented by Herodotus, a none too reliable historian of things he had not witnessed, puts the figures as follows: Persians 100,000; *hoplites*—trained troops—11,000; irregulars 11,000, equalling 22,000.

Grundy is the most definitely well-documented man. The author probably got his facts from Herodotus or, perhaps, Creasy.

There is no authority for the spelling: *Callimarchus*. It is: *Callimachus* or (Grundy) *Kallimachos*.

p. 8 Themistocles is referred to as "the admiral of

the galleys, who had left the sea to fight on land."

Creasy says of him—"Themistocles, the *future* founder of the Athenian navy and the destined victor of Salamis." However, I have not cross-checked this.

p. 6 "We Greeks have undervalued ourselves all these years."

The Athenians had been left to shift for themselves in the face of the Persians, having been abandoned by all save the Platæans and the Spartans (although the latter came up too late). Miltiades would be more likely to say "We Athenians."

p. 10 "The Greeks burst from the shelter of the trees at a run."

There were no trees on those slopes. Grundy says so.

And "When the sacrifices were favorable the Athenians in array advanced in *quick step*. He insists on this point. The two bodies were 8 strada apart (nearly a mile) and troops armored and armed as the Athenians were could not have begun to run that distance, however well trained. Herodotus asserts the Atheni ans ran, but he wasn't there either.

On p. 10-11 The author hints at the heavy losses of the Athenians. From beginning to end they lost only 192 men killed, and most of these fell later when the boats drawn up on the beach were attacked. Here Callimachus fell.

According to Grundy the Persian cavalry was not at Marathon. They were probably in the galleys waiting for a signal to dash down upon Athens.

Babylon, Long Island.

I agree with him pretty generally, except that I think the Persians were at least 50,000 (probably more, although not 100,000, as a good many troops were absent at time of battle) and that the Athenians were from 22,000 to 26,000, basing this estimate on the fact that *hoplites* were always accompanied by at least one slave per man, and besides slaves light troops included certain number of poor citizens and freemen. I also am convinced that the hills were wooded. The Greek attack was masked until the last minute. Also, Creasy and other authorities say specifically the hills were wooded.

I am convinced from internal evidence, which I can elaborate, if necessary, that the stated loss of 192 men didn't include the slaves. It certainly didn't include the Platæans, and we are told that the dead Greeks were buried in *three* separate mounds. I don't think it's particularly important to emphasize whether the Greeks advanced at a quickstep or a run. They *could* have run. I suspect the wings trotted and the center ran.—A. D. H. S.

THIS poem in this issue is by no means S. Omar Barker's first in our magazine, but we're giving our poets too, a chance, to act human and Mr. Barker is doing it and following Camp-Fire custom by introducing himself.

There is, of course, a prejudice among masculine gents against poets. I've seen poets that earned it. But I've probably known more poets than most of you and, honestly, they're not so doggoned bad. Nearly all of them cut their hair like other folks and don't wear any funnier clothes than you and I do. Of course there are the other kind, who seem to think poems can't be done right unless the poet is pallid, flowing-tied, anemic and the queerer the better, but I'd say they're rather in the minority.

I sort of sort 'em out, the queer ones, in my own mind this way. If they're poets because they're queer, that's all right, but if they're queer because they're poets I'm agin them.

If it weren't for queer people the world wouldn't ever get anywhere. Most folks are pretty much alike, not going anywhere in particular on their own but just running along in a groove worn smooth and deep through past centuries by billions of others like themselves. It's only the queer ones that for some crazy reason or another bolt off at a tangent, get out of the groove and see at least a bit of all that's outside it. Sometimes they dig in hard enough to make a new little groove—and at once the flow of "just folks," having about the same initiative as a stream of water, is partly diverted into the new groove. Sometimes the queer ones and their new grooves are good, sometimes bad, but in general they are valuable, for they make the human flow spread out over more ground. Which is what we call progress. Hats off to these queer ones.

But when some chap decides he'll be a poet or an artist or a big business man or anything else and then makes himself queer just in order to look, sound and act what he conceives to be the part, well, they'd be more useful to agriculture than to anything else. As fertilizer.

Let's not be too severe on poets and such. Most of all, let's not make the blunder of considering love of beauty an unmanly trait.

Now for Mr. Barker, who would seem to be considerably human himself and hardly to be classed among the anemic:

Beulah, New Mexico.

The story of my life. Chap. I is a little Chap., being merely a word to the effect that I was a high-born baby, my birth occurring in the settler days of New Mexico at Beulah, N. M., something over 8,000 feet above the sea.

I was a bashful barefoot boy, more given to spending the day throwing rocks at innocent squirrels than to combin' my hair and flirtin' with girls.

TIME lengthened me to something over six feet and almost ever since I reached that measurement some editor (never of *Adventure*, thank the Red Gods!) has been trying to take me down a few notches. They are still trying, especially when I

write soulful sentiment, but my affinity for the writing game seems as tenacious as that of a cockle-burr for a burro's tail.

My vices, avocations, picnics, favorite songs and former occupations are, more or less: school-teaching, reporting, hunting, fishing, soldiering, flivvering, cowpunching, publicity-ing, getting elected to the New Mexico Legislature and living to regret it, talking Mex. and Frog, eating at sheep camps, consuming chili con carne, traveling and trying to shoot the gimbus bird in its native haunts. To which I might add, farming and swearing at the weather—which here is ideal for everything in the world but farming.

My opinions and prejudices are: I believe in always giving the other fellow credit for sincerity in his beliefs, but no credit when he wants to buy prunes. If he can't pay for his prunes either kick him out or give them to him, depending on what sort of a brother bimbo he is. I have yet to see a snow-white sheep or a coal-black one. The day I see either I'll surrender in favor of the Puritans. Also purchase colored goggles.

I SOMEHOW still have more respect for an ax-hewn log cabin than I have for the sleek temples of modernity. I live in the lofty Rockies and poetize about the pines.

All of which is no doubt duly noble. It needs to be to atone for my sins. Namely: I don't care much for radio, I don't use stacomb on my blond locks, and I sometimes (have mercy!) tootle the slide trombone in the Las Vegas Cowboys' Band.

Otherwise I am 31 years old, unmarried, lank, an ex-hard-boiled sergeant, and glad I happened to be named for the Persian Tentmaker Poet whose verses are my favorite literature.

Hold all this against me if you choose. It's the way I am anyhow.—S. OMAR BARKER.

P. S. I like, by the way, *both* cats and dogs.

In his poem in this issue we in the office didn't get the significance of "Júanico." Maybe Mr. Barker's reply to our inquiry will be of interest to others at Camp-Fire:

Now for "Júanico." Philologically it is a familiar, somewhat affectionate diminutive in Spanish for the name "Juan." But it is often used as a nickname by the natives for any old man of a village who is so far in his dotage that all he ever sees, hears or talks about is the stirring events of his own youth. One of those old men whose eyes look inward. For instance, it is not unusual to hear a young fellow comment, when another tells a story of something a little improbable, especially hinting at the supernatural, that "old Júanico has been seeing things again." So you see the suggestiveness of the name. —S. OMAR BARKER.

The following is unique. It is the one, lone, single voice in approval of my expressed belief that, even measured by materialistic standards alone, it would pay us better to forgive, rather than strive to collect, Europe's debts to this country, seeing to it that the European people themselves, not their political governments or military establishments, received the direct benefit. There were plenty of letters from people appalled by my sacrilegious stand against our national worship of the Golden Calf and my alarming refusal to adopt as my own the materialistic motto, "The Dollar über Alles," but the following is, barring a letter whose writer is an Australian and therefore not to be considered by you, the only backing I've had from some hundreds of thousands of American readers.

I am so pleased with this rare curiosity that I give it here, not even cutting out its pleasant words about myself. That seems warranted, since it is written by a member of our writers' brigade to the editor who passes on what he submits to our magazine. He is therefore, by your materialistic standards, obviously one who has something material at stake and therefore not to be credited with sincerity, honesty or anything else except a low cunning. For honesty and sincerity can of course have no place in your materialistic code except when they can be made to serve the purpose of gaining some material end—unless you are not logical in applying your standards.

I confess it is a disappointment to find that in all Camp-Fire's hundreds of thousands there are no Christians, or at least none brave enough to stand forth as such and approve my application of the theory of Christianity even if it does cost money. Except of course the one American and the one Australian, who may not be Christians at all except in spirit and who don't count anyhow, being subject to a keen materialistic charge of being interested parties.

Of course, I'm not much of a Christian myself and, God knows, don't set myself up as any model. I don't even claim to carry out my beliefs consistently. How many do carry out their beliefs consistently? Even you materialists are not consistent in either theory or practise. For a good many of you do claim to be Christians and pretty darned good Christians at that. Except maybe on week-days and when it's going to cost a lot of cash to be a consistent one.

No question of Christianity involved? Well, maybe not. I'd just thought the Golden Rule meant what it said and meant it all the time and that "forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors" was supposed to

apply even to material debts during the week. Perhaps some of the ministers and priests who have kept so very quiet will enlighten me. Doubtless they can justify their silence very solemnly and impressively, but I don't understand, even if they have reasons for not including these particular debts among those that are to be forgiven, why it isn't part of their job to help champion the spiritual or idealistic or whatever in any public combat against materialism. And isn't materialism—when it exists as a reasoned theory logically applied, not just as a ready-to-hand excuse for greed—the same as atheism and isn't it Christianity's job to combat atheism at every opportunity? And isn't a chance to talk to some hundreds of thousands of people an opportunity?

All in all, my little experiment in practising Christianity leaves me rather puzzled. But it's been an interesting, if a lonely and unpopular, experiment, and maybe I'll take another flyer at it some day. Anyhow there are Post Sargent, Congressman Andrew and an Australian for company and I'm willing, even if you're not, to believe them sincere. We four might found an international club—Humble and Bewildered Experimenters in Christianity, Adventurers into the Realms of Unexplored Christianity, or something like that. Post Sargent claims there are others and, with four to start with, we might get up quite a little club and probably all get put into our respective penitentiaries as dangerous characters.

Of course the sensible course is just to throw in with the popular Golden Calf cult and work earnestly for "Dollars über Alles," but, though I may have neither brain nor soul, I have a stomach.

Here's the curiosity. Mr. Sargent is mistaken in giving *Adventure* and me any credit for the Plattsburg Camps beyond a bit of publicity for them. He evidently has in mind the organizing of the original American Legion by *Adventure* in 1914.

New York.

DEAR MR. HOFFMAN: Your remarks concerning the payment of the French debt, in a recent issue, appeared to me, as doubtless to tens of thousands of fellow readers, so common-sensical—practical as well as generous—that it never occurred to most of us to take exception—or to state our hearty agreement with you. That is the trouble with us all: the vast majority that acquiesce in a good action rarely take the trouble to voice their opinions, to organize their collective power for justice, to energize their principles into a militant philosophy—even to state their approval.

Hence, a very small, disapproving minority that clamors its disapproval must sometimes seem to editors, statesmen and other sincere spokesmen of the nation's finer moods, to be the *vox populi* interpreting *vox Dei*. Let me state as emphatically as I can, with some little knowledge of Americans from coast to coast, with considerable technical knowledge of the subject under discussion, that your voice, even though lifted alone in this matter, is the *vox Dei*, being the voice of humanity and justice—and America. Of this latter I am convinced.

But is your voice lifted alone? To be sure, your editorial had the honor to be a pioneer in the matter of remitting the French debt. If my memory does not play me false, you and *Adventure* had likewise the honor to propose and advocate American preparedness just before the World War—or our entrance into it—by the institution of the Plattsburg system of military training. If your staunch Americanism and your prevision of American needs in the event of war—even in the face of your humane philosophy—have not earned you the right to challenge the danger to America of a worse foe than war—Materialism!—then most of us must remain mute.

Your voice is not lifted alone. Lately, A. Piatt Andrew, U. S. Representative from Massachusetts, actuated by the same motives as yourself, introduced a bill or resolution into the House of Representatives, calling upon his colleagues to write into history America's sense of the responsibility that the possession of vast wealth casts upon her, in the face of France's poverty and woes. America has been gloriously generous in the past; but that fact does not free us from responsibility toward the present and future. A loan is not necessarily the measure of a debt; nor is justice to be measured by its legality.

The argument for France rests upon far finer grounds than *cash*. You have stated most of them. Congressman Andrew has stated others. You have both spoken as Americans. If I were intolerant, I would point to the fact that a voice from Australia is not the voice of America; that your name and Andrew's are credited with a voting power that goes back generations in "Who's Who *in America*." I am not intolerant. But I would insist that your contention represents the mute voice of the majority of Americans. Going contrary to what seems to be the present official attitude, I predict that your practical idealism will see itself justified within several years by the action that the United States will take in the matter of the terms of the French debt.—POST SARGENT.

SERVICES TO OUR READERS

Lost Trails.

Old Songs That Men Have Sung, a section of "Ask Adventure," runs in alternate issues from "Lost Trails."

Camp-Fire Stations: Full list in second issue of every other month.

Various Practical Services to Any Reader: Free Identification Card; Forwarding Service; Camp-Fire Buttons, etc.

VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES TO ANY READER

These services of *Adventure*, mostly free, are open to any one. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we ask in return only that you **read and observe the simple rules,** thus saving needless delay and trouble for us. The whole spirit of the magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we can help we're ready and willing to try. **Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.**

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Metal Cards—For twenty-five cents we will send you *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Give same data as for pasteboard cards. Holders of pasteboard cards can be registered under both pasteboard and metal cards if desired, but old numbers can not be duplicated on metal cards. If you no longer wish your old card, destroy it carefully and notify us, to avoid confusion and possible false alarms to your friends registered under that card.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Missing Friends or Relatives

(*See Lost Trails in next issue.*)

Back Issues of *Adventure*

WILL SELL: *Adventure* complete for 1924 and 1925. 72 copies in splendid condition. Will sell either year, 36 copies, for $3.60; but will not break years. $7.20 for the lot.—Address, F. J. OGDEN, Lewisville, Monroe County, Ohio.

WILL SELL: *Adventure* from 1914 to 1925 lacking 16 numbers, totaling 240 copies plus 44 duplicates to highest bidder.—Address, LEWIS A. BARKER, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

WILL BUY: Nov. and Dec., 1910; Jan., Feb., Dec., 1911; June, July, Sept., Nov., 1912; April, May, June, July, Dec., 1913; Jan., March, April, Nov., 1914; Jan., April, July, 1915; June, 1916.—Address, E. A. KENT, Holstein, Ia.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscripts. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3,000 welcomed.

Camp-Fire Stations

Our Camp-Fire is extending its Stations all over the world. Any one belongs who wishes to. Any member desiring to meet those who are still hitting the trails may maintain a Station in his home or shop where wanderers may call and receive such hospitality as the Keeper wishes to offer. The only requirements are that the Station display the regular sign, provide a box for mail to be called for and keep the regular register book and maintain his Station in good repute. Otherwise Keepers run their Stations to suit themselves and are not responsible to this magazine or representative of it. List of Stations and further details are published in the Camp-Fire in the second issue of each month. Address letters regarding Stations to LAURENCE JORDAN.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied.

Addresses

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached,* are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.**

2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**

3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**

4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**

5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

Please Note: To avoid using so much needed space each issue for standing matter and to gain more space for the actual meat of "Ask Adventure" the full statement of its various sections and of "Lost Trails" will be given only in alternate issues. In other issues only the bare names of the sections will be given, inquirers to get exact fields covered and names and addresses from full statement in alternate issues. Do *not* write to the magazine, but to the editors of the sections at their home addresses.

1—3. The Sea. In Three Parts
4—6. Islands and Coasts. In Three Parts
7, 8. New Zealand and the South Sea Islands. In Two Parts
9. Australia and Tasmania
10. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
11. New Guinea
12, 13. Philippine and Hawaiian Islands
14—18. Asia. In Five Parts
19—26. Africa. In Eight Parts
27, 28. Turkey and Asia Minor
29—35. Europe. In Seven Parts
36—38. South America. In Three Parts
39. Central America
40—42. Mexico. In Three Parts
43—51. Canada. In Nine Parts
52. Alaska
53. Baffinland and Greenland
54—59. Western U. S. In Six Parts
60—64. Middle Western U. S. In Five Parts
65—74. Eastern U. S. In Ten Parts
A. Radio
B. Mining and Prospecting
C. Old Songs That Men Have Sung
D1—3. Weapons, Past and Present. In Three Parts
E. Salt and Fresh Water Fishing
F, G. Forestry in the U. S. and Tropical Forestry
H—J. Aviation, Army and Navy Matters
K. American Anthropology, North of Panama Canal
L. First Aid on the Trail
M. Health-Building Outdoors
N. Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada
O, P. Herpetology and Entomology
Standing Information

TOM L. MILLS, of the New Zealand end of our A. A. staff writes: "From away back of the beyond of China comes an A. A. query with this unique tag to it: 'Please do not reply to me through *Adventure*, as very often a copy gets stolen by bandits, and therefore I do not want my letter to be published.' Which indicates some real adventure for *Adventure!* And that reminds me that an A. A. querist in Peru a couple of years ago wrote me that there was a risk of his letters and my replies getting into the hands of the revolutionaries. It's a lively world in spots, isn't it!"

Probably it is unnecessary to add that the replies which are printed in the magazine are taken from carbon copies of replies already sent to the inquirers. Some time, if you are interested, we may find space to tell all about the inner workings of the Ask Adventure department.

Names and addresses of department editors and the exact field covered by each section are given in the next issue of the magazine. Do NOT write to the magazine itself.

Guns

WHEN did the rifle first come into use in the American Colonies?

Request:—"I shall be much obliged if you can give me any information as to when the early colonists, hunters and scouts in North America first adopted rifles in preference to smooth-bore muskets.

In Mr. Pendexter's story 'Log Cabin Men' a scout says (in *Adventure* for 10th March, page 122): 'There is a man in Pennsylvania who is turning out a gun that shoots a small bullet. Deckert or Deckard. Some name like that. I've heard forest-runners talk about him and his guns. Deadly accurate at one hundred yards. The work of the Pennsylvania men with their rifles at Louisburg has taught us, I believe, that the rifled gun will take the place of the musket within a very few years.'

No doubt the change from smooth bore to rifle was very gradual, and it stands to reason that the rifle was more costly than the other arm. Now is it correct that the earliest rifle makers in North America were Swiss and Germans? And were all these early rifles made with long, heavy barrels, and of small bore?

Lastly, can you recommend any book dealing with American rifles, past and present?"—F. GODFREY, Jersey, C. I. Great Britain.

Reply, by Mr. Wiggins:—In response to your letter, I will say that the use of the rifle in America has been general since the War of 1754-63, known to us as the French and Indian War, in which Braddock was defeated.

From what I can learn, the flintlock rifle, as we generally understand the weapon, dates from about the beginning of the eighteenth century; my reasons for believing this are the statements that Captain Dillon, of whom more anon, has a good specimen with a date of 1719, if I recall correctly, stamped in the metal of the barrel. The photo of this rifle shows it to have been the conventional long-barreled, short-stocked, single-triggered model made and used so widely in the border wars and the Revolution.

I have read in very old books that King Philip, the Indian chieftain of New England, in his great war with the Colonists in 1675 or some such date, had a rifled weapon. It may have been true, but I believe the rifle dates, as I stated above, to the early part of the eighteenth century as far as general use is concerned. I believe the first makers were the German settlers of Pennsylvania, among whom were some of my own ancestors.

As regards the makers of the rifle used by *Burnham* of the story you mention, the name has been spelled "Dechart" (which I believe to be the correct form), "Deckert" and the accepted method, "Deckard."

As to works dealing with this period of weapons, I'll recommend the following books;

"The Kentucky Rifle," Dillon. To be procured from the National Rifle Association, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C. "Firearms in American History," Sawyer, Vol. I. The Cornhill Company, Boston, Mass.

Both of these books are by recognized authorities, and will interest you, I am sure.

British Honduras

RUBBER—and some experiments by Mr. Ford.

Request:—I am going to British Honduras next week to manage a number of plantations. Among others there is a fairly large one of rubber which was planted over 20 years ago.

Can you describe to me fully the best method of collecting, curing and marketing this rubber?

I am unable to get any literature here on any tropical products but think that this is the only thing that is liable to stick me. I am a Canadian and have read the *Adventure* since before the war. It was forwarded to me during that period and I am positive I have seen letters on collection of rubber but forget the authors. If you have any literature about agriculture in the south I would be very much obliged if you would mail me some as I want to get maximum production if possible.—H. V. WHITE, All Pines, Br. Honduras.

Reply, by Mr. Emerson:—The subject of RUBBER is an extensive one, and hardly could be got into an ordinary letter, but I will give the following, viz:—

The wild rubber existing in Central America is of an inferior grade, the principal rubber producing trees being the Castilloa Elastica and various shrubs. The prevailing custom of coagulation is by digging a hole in the ground and adding ashes, and is a poor method to make it fit for market. If modern methods were used, it would be much better

than it is now, but at its best it can not compete with the higher grade *para*. Much rubber is taken in trade in parts of Central America, and is readily disposed of in New York at prevailing prices.

Venezuela possesses great rubber forests. This vast territory adjacent to Brazil, contiguous to the Rios Negro, Cassiquiare, and the upper Orinoco, produces considerable Hevea rubber, which comes down the Orinoco to Ciudad Bolivar, and sometimes down the Rio Negro to Manos. The Cassiquiare River forms a navigable channel between the head waters of the Orinoco and the Rio Negro during the rainy season. This rubber area is estimated to contain about one hundred million acres, but has never been thoroughly exploited. The rigidifloria is probably the source of the rubber gathered in this territory and is not the Brasilensis. Over toward the border of British Guiana there are also Heveas, but whether good or bad has not been officially reported upon.

Several years ago an Englishman took some *hevea* seeds out of Brazil, declaring them to be rare botanical specimens that should not be opened by the customs officers. Thus they were allowed to pass on this statement, but were in fact seeds of the tree that produces the finest rubber, the *para* of commerce. These seeds were taken to India and planted, and from them the war of "*plantation*" against "*wild*" rubber started. Immense plantations soon grew up in India and other places in the far East, upon which better rubber was grown as compared with the wild product of the Amazon jungles, as it was better cured and prepared for market. As soon as they began to put it upon the market, wild rubber dropped in price from about two dollars a pound, down to forty cents, or in other words it knocked the bottom out of the "rubber boom" which was in progress, and as a result many people in the Amazon valley went hungry. At the present time, plantation rubber is decidedly controlled by the English planters.

THE rubber industry in the United States of America began with the discovery of the process of vulcanization in 1840. Rubber had been used by the South American natives before the discovery of Santo Domingo by Columbus. It was not until 1770, however, that rubber was utilized in any civilized country; then a few pieces of it were sent to England to be used by artists for erasing pencil marks. The first rubber imported into U. S. A. in 1800, came in the form of bottles, and was looked upon simply as an interesting curiosity. During the next twenty years, sea-captains coming from South American countries were constantly bringing specimens of "gum elastic" as it was then more generally called, simply as the strange product of a distant land.

More than 200 species of plants yield "*latex*," from which rubber may be obtained.

A wild rubber plant resembles slightly the Texas greasewood bush that grows in Texas, and nearby territory. It is supposed to be the only rubber-producing plant known to grow uncultivated in North America, and is found in the Big Bend country of both Texas and Mexico. There is (or was) a rubber factory located in Brewster County, Texas, which manufactured rubber from this plant. I think Henry Ford has something on his acreage that will also give the desired product. Let us hope so, at any rate.

Rubber is now being transported to the United States of America from the East Indies in the form of latex, instead of in blocks and sheets, known to the trade since the beginning of the industry. Tank cars for latex will soon be a familiar sight on the railroads. Latex is the white sap of the rubber tree from which commercial rubber is made. By the use of ammonia the product is handled without the risk of hardening.

"Ornazote" is an invention by means of which rubber is impregnated with nitrogen gas, thereby filling it with innumerable cells, and it may revolutionize the making of rubber. Ornazote is the trade name of this new rubber. A ball of it was subjected to a pressure of 32,000 pounds, after which test it reasserted itself sufficiently within 24 hours to hit the ceiling when it was bounced from the ground. It is more buoyant than cork when placed in water.

Rubber is so essential to the automobile industry that much deep study is given to the subject. At present date rubber is strictly under British control, and some people think that it may be manipulated so as to pay their war debt to the U. S. A., which is another way of saying that the people of the U. S. A. will really pay it, unless some American can invent a method to defeat the scheme.

Our enterprising and progressive citizen, Mr. Henry Ford, has decided to plant several hundred acres of various "latex" bearing plants, and thus start an industry in this country, by trying to utilize some of the common weeds of the fields, and his experimental laboratories are devoting much attention thereto for besides the rubber so obtained there would be the by-products, such as fiber, varnishes, and also fertilizer for the soil. Some of these latex plants grow of their own free will, thus saving the expense of planting.

The rubber tree takes several years to develop, and it is rather delicate as compared with the latex variety of plant which will bring a crop of rubber every year, same as produced in wheat and barley.

If you don't want an answer enough to enclose FULL return postage to carry it, you don't want it.

California

AS A camping place for young ladies.

Request:—"Seeing your name listed in 'Ask Adventure' as authority on Western U. S. I am writing to ask your suggestions and advice on a motor camping trip through California the coming summer. There will be two of us, young women 33 and 34 years old, and we have a complete camping outfit in a Ford touring car. We sleep in the car and do not carry a tent.

1. Can you give us an itinerary of the principal points of interest and scenic beauty through California? We have about five weeks to go from Tacoma, Wash., to Tia Juana, Mexico, and back and want to see as much of the country, particularly Calif., as possible.

2. How about taking our dogs (Boston Terriers) into California? I saw some time ago where pet stock was not allowed to enter the State on account of the hoof and mouth disease. Is there still a ban?

3. How about our carrying a firearm, for protection? We do not hunt, but some people seem to

think we should have a gun for protection. If so, what would you recommend?

We have camped out all over this State and never been molested or disturbed, but one can never tell when such a thing might happen. How about carrying firearms in Oregon and California?

We would appreciate very much your courtesy and suggestions and am enclosing an addressed envelope with stamps for your reply at an early date."——, Aberdeen, Wash.

Reply, by Mr. Harriman:—Take a little advice from me and stop your trip at San Diego. Tia Juana has little to commend it to decent people. No beauty, no culture, no scenery, nothing attractive.

I would drive south by way of Grant's Pass, Oregon, to Crescent City, California, thence to Requa—to Eureka—to San Francisco. Then across to Tahoe, by the highland route to Yosemite Valley, then south to Sequoia Park, thence south to Los Angeles and on to San Diego. This gives you the Del Norte and Humboldt Counties redwood forests, as well as the big tree groves, the beautiful lake region of Tahoe and a long valley-mountain road if you come in by Ridge Route, as you will.

The ban on dogs was lifted long ago. Our quarantine ended a year ago.

We have a State law against carrying concealed weapons and a gun hid in a car is counted the same as hidden in the clothing. State's prison offenses, unless you have a permit from some California sheriff. I think a revolver or pistol quite necessary for two young women camping alone, but you must get a permit.

When I travel my .45 Colt is always where my hand can drop on it with no delay or shift of position. I wear a deputy's badge secured for me by our chief deputy district attorney, so can pack a gun.

I do not know the Oregon law about short guns.

Sleep with the gun under your blankets, where your hand can grip it instantly, and do not be afraid to shoot if any man tries to molest you. Remember to point the gun at the middle of the body. The head is too small a target. Get a .38 S. & W. or Colt.

Great Lakes

HOW to get a ship.

Request:—"I worked during the month of November on a Lake freighter named *John Anderson*. I liked the work and intend to go back on the Lakes and work again. I would like to know when the season opens, so that I won't get there ahead of time. Thanking you in advance, I remain."—John A. Hunter, Worcester, Mass.

Reply, by Mr. Gardner:—The season will be a little late this year on account of the ice fields in the upper lakes and rivers; but if I were you I would write to the captain of the ship I was on last year and have him reserve a berth for me; that is, if you know where that ship "laid up" at.

You will find that the assembly rooms are filled to overflowing with men right now and will be for the next three weeks, so if you think you want to take a chance it might be all right to start for the nearest port now, but it might be better to wait a little while.

I am sending you the marine news as given daily by the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* and perhaps it will help you to decide what you want to do.

Sailing

HERRINGBONE stitches and other points not clear to the beginner.

Request:—"Would you kindly answer the following questions:

1. What are a herringbone stitch, a flat seam and a round seam in canvas?
2. How can I whip rope with palm and needle?
3. What is a lead line and how is it used?
4. What is a patent log and how is it used?
5. What is meant by boxing the compass by quarter points?
6. What lights are used on sail and power vessels and the elementary rules of the road?
7. What is a coxswain?
8. Is there a good steady wind in Harbor Springs, Michigan, during the summer?"—H. M., Kansas City, Mo.

Reply, by Mr. Gardner:—No trouble at all to answer your questions.

1. The herringbone stitch as I know it consists of a series of Xs or as some people call them crisscrosses. A flat seam in canvas is where the raw edges of the pieces are lapped over one another and sewed on both sides. As to the round seam I am not so well posted on that.

2. To whip rope with a palm and needle, start at the end of the rope that will be exposed and wrap tightly as you go back; when you have whipped far enough run the needle under and over each strand of the rope, then go under the whipped part and over the top back to where you started lengthwise, do this to every strand in turn, fasten sail-twine and cut off.

3. A lead line is a line or rope with a piece of lead weighing from seven to fifteen pounds fastened on the end, used to find the depths of water. The line is marked with strips of cloth of different colors, with pieces of leather and with pieces of marlin; these markers show the depths of water in fathoms. It is heaved overboard usually from the bow or bow-chains of the ship, and when bottom is reached it is pulled in and the readings are noted. The end of the lead has a shallow cup fashioned in it filled with soap or other soft material to pick up gravel or sand as the case may be, off the bottom so the navigator can tell if his anchor will take hold.

4. A patent log is an instrument used for measuring the distance the ship has traveled from any given point.

5. Boxing the compass by quarter points is merely being able to repeat from memory the points and quarter points of the compass as, from North to East and East to South, example, N1/4E—N1/2E—N3/4—NbyE—NbyE 1/4E, etc.

6. Lights, red to port, green to starboard, fore and aft range lights (white) while running at night, white lights on the rail when anchored or in port one fore and one aft. The best rules I can think of are: If in safety or in doubt always keep a sharp lookout. Obey the Government pilot rules, keep your lights burning brightly at night, don't crowd the other fellow too much when in a tight place.

7. The man who steers an oar-sculled small boat.

8. Steady enough for small boats, I think.

State Police

A FORCE that maintains a high reputation for service by maintaining high requirements for admission.

Request:—"I notice you are able to give information for State Police of any state.

I trust you will be able to give me the information that I desire. At present I am serving in the United States Marine Corps. When I am discharged my intentions are to join the State Police of West Virginia, or Pennsylvania. Is it possible for you to inform me as to whom I may get in touch with so as to know just what qualifications are required of a person joining the State Police; where to apply; what are the chances of joining?"—OLLIE B. TURNER, Pearl Harbor, T. H.

Reply, by Mr. Bent:—Am afraid that you will be unable to get into the State Police of West Virginia as they require that an applicant be a resident of that state. You should stand a fair chance, however, of enlisting in the Pennsylvania force.

For Pennsylvania an applicant must be a citizen of the U. S.; between 21 and 40; of good moral character; present an honorable discharge from Army, Navy or Marine Corps; present three letters as to character from home town; be able to ride a horse; and be at least five feet six inches tall without shoes.

The physical examination is pretty rigid. The mental, or written examination is usually general, to give an idea as to the education of the applicant.

Pay is $1,200 a year with extra pay of $60 a year for years served up to five.

Enlistment is for two years.

A *pro rata* mess assessment is charged each trooper, but everything else is furnished.

A recruit goes to a State Police training school where he is given a very thorough course in various subjects pertaining to the work. He is then assigned to a troop—after passing a final examination—where his schooling goes on all the time he is in barracks.

For application blanks write to the Superintendent, Department of State Police, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. When your application has been received and passed upon you will be notified as to when and where the examinations will be held.

I wish you the best of luck and hope you won't hesitate to call on me at any time there is anything else in my line that you wish to know.

Accompany your inquiry with stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Oil Workers

EVERY one wants to be first.

Request:—"My request is on oil, and oil-fields. Following is a list of questions which I would like to have you help me out on:

What are the opportunities for an unexperienced northerner in the oil-fields?

Has he any chance for advancement if he applies his education to his work?

How are oil-men classed among other people in that section?

How do they live? Would it be safe for a married man to bring his wife? What kind of a home could he give her on the field?

Where would you advise me to go, Texas or Oklahoma?

Do you think it would be possible for me to get work, not having any experience? and do you think I could find anybody who would take an interest in me and help me get started?

What kind of a salary could I expect?"—CHAS. J. BALL, Chicago, Ill.

Reply, by Mr. Whiteaker:—A person who has had no experience in the oil-fields would find the work very hard and disgusting. If a person has been used to hard work and long hours as a laborer the work would not be so hard on him. The workers in the oil-fields are rough and ready men. If he starts in as a common laborer he will more than likely stay in that position, unless he shows an aptitude as a mechanic, tool-dresser, or driller, etc.

In the oil sections when a person speaks of an oil-man he usually has in mind one that is a promoter, lease owner, etc.

In a new oil-field there are usually not enough houses to accommodate the people that make a rush for work, leases, various businesses, etc., that always follows the opening of a new field. For weeks some of the newcomers have to live in tents, roughly thrown up shacks, in dugouts, or camp out in the open. Rent of rooms, beds, space for a tent, etc., are high. Food supplies go up in price to often double the customary price. The first few days in a new field are usually of a knock-down and drag-out order. Every one wants to be first. Some of the men bring their wives after they have found suitable quarters. It is safe enough for a woman but many of the men leave their wives in a near-by town away from the oil boom.

I would not advise any one to go to the oil-fields. You would have to take your chance with many others trying to obtain work. There are many better jobs if one knew just where to find them. I would suggest making a trip—if you are not at present employed—over the country and see what you can find.

There are several new oil pools opened here in Texas in the past few months. Most of the oil-fields in Oklahoma are old tried out ones and those wells are producing about the same number of barrels per day as they have been doing for months. The crews on these wells are permanent unless an accident happens. The new pools that are being opened use "floaters" principally until the field has proved itself. Many of these in Texas. You are not likely to find any one that will take an interest in you. Every man looks after himself. The wages range from $3.50 to $5.00 per day for ordinary labor in the oil-fields.

"ASK ADVENTURE" editors are appointed with extreme care. If you can meet our exacting requirements and qualify as an expert on some topic or territory not now covered, we shall be glad to talk matters over with you. Address JOSEPH COX, *Adventure*, New York.

Old Songs That Men Have Sung

Devoted to outdoor songs, preferably hitherto unprinted—songs of the sea, the lumber-camps, Great Lakes, the West, old canal days, the negro, mountains, the pioneers, etc. Send in what you have or find, so that all may share in them.

Although this department is conducted primarily for the collection and preservation of old songs, the editor will give information about modern ones when he can do so and *IF* all requests are accompanied with self-addressed envelope and reply postage (*NOT* attached). Write to Mr. Gordon direct, *NOT* to the magazine.

Conducted by R. W. GORDON, care of *Adventure*, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City.

IT'S been some time since any of the older ballad texts have appeared in the department. They come in now and then, not so many as I would like to have. But that is to be expected, for they are no longer sung so frequently as they once were.

The first, "Fair Alender," is better known as "Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor," and appears in the great Child collection as No. 73. Both names have changed somewhat in the course of years of singing.

Fair Alender

(Communicated by Mr. Clyde O. Cole, of Wichita, Kansas, as sung by his grandmother many years ago.)

"Come mother, come mother,
And give me your blessing.
Shall I marry Fair Alender,
Or bring the Brown Girl home?"

"The Brown Girl she has houses and lots,
Fair Alender she has none;
Before I can give you my good blessing
Go bring the Brown Girl home."

He rode till he came to Fair Alender's house,
He knocked so loud that it rung;
And no one was so willing as Fair Alender
To rise and let him in.

"Fair Alender, Fair Alender, Fair Alender,"
he cried,
"I come to ask you to my wedding,
The Brown Girl to be the bride."

"Lord Tomis, Lord Tomis, Lord Tomis," she cried,
"How can you be so cruel?
I thought that I was to be your bride
And you to be my bridegroom."

She rode till she came to Lord Tomis's house,
She knocked so loud that it rung;
There was none so willing as Lord Tomis himself
To rise and let her come in.

He took her by her lily-white hand,
He led her through the hall,
He placed her at the head of his own table;
Gently he kissed her before them all.

"Lord Tomis, Lord Tomis, Lord Tomis," she cried,
"Is this your wondrous bride?
Why she is so dark and tan!
When you could have married the fairest young lady
The fairest in the land."

The Brown Girl having a knife in her hand,
The point both keen and sharp,
She pierced Fair Alender through the breast,
She pierced her through the heart.

"Fair Alender, Fair Alender," Lord Tomis cried,
"What makes you look so pale?
You always had such a fine color
I thought it would never fail."

He took the Brown Girl by the hand,
He led her through the hall;
Took out his sword, cut off her head,
And kicked it against the wall.

"Go dig my grave both long and wide
And dig it very deep,
And place Fair Alender in my arms
And the Brown Girl at my feet."

He placed the hilt against the wall,
The point against his breast;
Says, "Here's the end of three good lovers,
God take them all to rest!"

THE second ballad, "Johnnie Dear" is usually called "The Hangman's Tree" or "The Maid Freed from the Gallows," in American versions it is usually the woman who saves the man instead of the man who saves the woman. The following text was learned in this country although Mr. Barnett sends it from Australia.

Johnnie Dear

(Contributed by Mr. A. F. Barnet.)

"Hold up your head, dear Johnnie!
Hold it up for a while!
I think I see your father a-coming,
Riding many a mile."

"Oh, have you brought me gold, dear father?
Or have you brought me a fee?
Or have you come for to take me home
From off this Tyburn tree?"

"I've neither brought you gold, dear Johnnie,
I've neither brought you a fee,
But I have come for to see you hung
All on this Tyburn tree."

"Hold you your head, dear Johnnie!
Hold it up for a while!
I think I see your mother a-coming,
Riding many a mile."

"Oh, have you brought me gold, dear mother?
  Or have you brought me a fee?
Or have you come for to take me home
  From off this Tyburn tree?"

"I have neither brought you gold, dear Johnnie,
  I've neither brought you a fee,
But I have come for to see you hung
  All on this Tyburn tree."

"Hold up your head, dear Johnnie!
  Hold it up for a while!
I think I see your brother a-coming,
  Riding many a mile."

"Have you brought me gold, dear brother?
  Have you brought me a fee?
Or have you come for to take me home
  From off this Tyburn tree?"

"I've neither brought you gold, dear Johnnie,
  I've neither brought you a fee,
But I have come for to see you hung
  All on this Tyburn tree."

"Hold up your head, dear Johnnie!
  Hold it up for a while!
I think I see your sister a-coming,
  Riding many a mile."

"Have you brought me gold, dear sister?
  Have you brought me a fee?
Or have you come for to take me home
  From off this Tyburn tree?"

"I've neither brought you gold, dear Johnnie,
  I've neither brought you a fee,
But I've come for to see you hung
  All on this Tyburn tree."

"Hold up your head, dear Johnnie!
  Hold it up for a while!
I think I see your sweetheart a-coming,
  Walking many a mile."

"Have you brought me gold, dear sweetheart?
  Have you brought me a fee?
Or have you come for to see me hung
  Upon this Tyburn tree?"

"I have brought you gold, dear Johnnie,
  I have brought you a fee,
And I've come for to take you home
  Away from this Tyburn tree!"

ADDRESS all letters—R. W. GORDON, care of *Adventure*, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

AUGUST 8TH ISSUE

Besides the **three complete novelettes** and the **new serial** mentioned on the second page of this issue, the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

RAW RECRUITS — ***Fred F. Fleischer***
They were green until they saw the Rio Grande.

THE SHOP ON JUNK STREET — ***R. E. Hamilton***
"Fighting always come in China."

SPIRIT OF STEEL — ***Edmund Littell***
The hard-boiled steel-fighters took an oath.

THEY ALWAYS FORGET SOMETHING — ***Nevil Henshaw***
A true Como must be discreet.

THE KILLER — ***El Comancho***
The dog was trained to hate men.

RAMSDEN Conclusion — ***Talbot Mundy***
Tibet—and a priceless manuscript.

THE ISSUE following the next will contain *long* stories by W. C. Tuttle, Arthur O. Friel, Robert Carse; short stories by Arthur D. Howden Smith, Fiswoode Tarleton, William Byron Mowery, Harry G. Huse, Wilkeson O'Connell; stories of cowboys on the Western range, explorers up the Amazon, hard-case skippers on the high seas, spies in the Revolutionary War, troopers with Alexander in Persia, trappers in Lapland, Indians in the Rocky Mountains, daring men in dangerous places up and down the earth.

Why Whiskers Flourished in '49

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JULY 23rd ISSUE, 1926
VOL. LIX No. 2

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